

# Connecticut Common School Journal.

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All communications intended for the Journal, may be addressed to HENRY BARNARD, 2d., Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools, Hartford.

## SCHOOL RETURNS FOR 1839—40.

Pursuant to the provisions of the "Act to provide for the better supervision of common schools," and to enable the Board of School Commissioners to report to the Legislature the condition of every common school in the State, and the means of popular education generally, blank forms of returns conveniently arranged, were transmitted to the clerks of each school society, for the school visitors to fill out and return to the clerk, by the last day of March, 1840. We would earnestly and respectfully call the attention of the proper officers to these returns. Lest in any instance the blanks should not have reached their destination, we give the different items of information required, and shall address a number of this Journal, together with an extra containing the form, to some friend of common schools, with the request, if he is not on the Board of School Visitors, that he will hand the same to the Chairman of the Board.

**SUMMER SCHOOLS, 1839.**—There has never yet been submitted to the Legislature any detailed account of the common schools in the summer season. The Board ask for information respecting them in the following particulars—1. *Name or number of the district.* 2. *The whole number of scholars in attendance.* 3. *The average daily attendance.* 4. *The number of children between the ages of 4 and 16 in no schools public or private.* 5. *The teacher, whether male or female.* 6. 7. *How many seasons the teacher has taught in the same school, or elsewhere.* 8. 9. *Wages of teacher per month.* 10. *Length of summer school in weeks.*

Owing to the neglect of this class of schools, by the visitors last summer, or the want of memoranda, or to a failure in reporting their condition to the school society as is required by law, there may be some difficulty now in obtaining all the items of required information. We hope however that in all cases the returns will show the *name or number* of the district in which a *summer school* was kept—the *sex and compensation* of the teacher, and the *length* of the school.

**WINTER SCHOOLS.**—Let the facts asked for be accurately given respecting the winter schools, most of which are still in session, and there will be no occasion to ask for many of them again.

1. *The name or number of the District.* This should be entered in the first column, under the proper head. 2. *Number of persons between the ages of 4 and 16, as enumerated in August last.* This can be furnished by the District Committee, or the Clerk of the Society. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. These include items of *attendance*, and can be easily copied from the Register kept by the teacher. We hope that none of them will be omitted respecting any school. 9. *Number between 4 and 16 who are in no school public or private.* This can be ascertained by deducting the whole number under private instruction, and in the common schools, from the number enumerated in August. 10. *The date when the school commenced.* The day and initials of the month will be sufficient. 11.—*Length of school in weeks.* 12. *Name of the teacher.* We should like, in all instances, to have the name given, as opportunity is thus given to make known meritorious and successful teachers. 13. 14. 15. *The age of the teacher and the number of seasons he or she has taught before,* can be given by the teacher. 16. 17. *Wages of the teacher.* Under this head, there was evidently great want of accuracy last year.

*Under Wages per month and board round,* should be included all cases where the district pays for the board of the teacher. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. *The number of different authors used in the same school, in the principal branches of study.* The teacher can easily name the variety. 25. 26. 27. *school houses.* It can be easily ascertained, from personal inspection, whether the location of the school-house is healthy, convenient, pleasant and retired; the out-door arrangements neat and sufficient; the size spacious for the number of scholars; seats and desks of different heights, for children of different ages, and properly adapted to each other, and all so arranged as to promote the health and comfort of the scholar, and the proper supervision of the school by the teacher;—the light, heat, and ventilation are properly secured, and all in good repair. If all or most of these and other indispensable features of a good school-house, exist in any instance, it should be entered in the column, *good.* A + or the initial *g*, will indicate the fact. Otherwise, it should be entered in the same way, in the column *mediate or bad*, according to the judgment of the committee. 28. 29. 30. 31. *The amount of money raised by tax,* as provided by law *to build and repair school-houses, for fuel, and for school library,* can be ascertained from District Clerk or Treasurer, and entered in the appropriate column. 32. *The amount actually raised or to be raised per scholar,* can be ascertained from the District Committee. 33. *No. of volumes in District Library.* 34. *No. of parents who were not Committee, who visited the school during the winter.*—The teacher will find no difficulty in remembering this item. 35. *Date when visited by School Visitors.*

**School Books.** Under this head the visitors will enter the authors *now used* in the different studies, and also those which they would *recommend* to be used. Here follow several inquiries in reference to COMMON SCHOOLS of a HIGHER ORDER than the district schools—the practicability of establishing UNION SCHOOLS for the older children of two or more associating districts, and of placing the younger children in every district under a female teacher, both in summer and winter, &c. &c.

The above items of information are required by the board of School Commissioners, agreeable to the act "to provide for the better supervision of common schools."

**ACADEMIES, PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, LYCEUMS, &c.**—Information is solicited respecting all institutions and associations of this character, whether supported by endowment or individual liberality, to enable the Board to report to the Legislature the means of popular education enjoyed by different towns in the state. Without the information here sought, and for which we must be indebted to the voluntary co-operation of the friends of popular virtue and intelligence in the several towns, nothing like justice will be done to the means and condition of education in Connecticut. We hope that the visitors will collect full and accurate answers to all the inquiries on the above topics.

**REMARKS ON THE PROVISIONS OF THE SCHOOL LAW.**—The visitors are invited to communicate their views in reference to different provisions of the school law. These are arranged in appropriate paragraphs so that their views can be presented in a condensed manner, and a comparison be easily instituted between the views of different committees.

## PHYSICIANS AND COMMON SCHOOLS.

If time and moral influence are more valuable as means of doing good, than money, perhaps there are few works of charity more to be desired at present, than the gratuitous labors of those who have it in their power to bestow them, in endeavoring to elevate our common schools.

It is, moreover, a well known fact, that the more elevated the character of a school already is, in any given instance, the greater is our hope of improving it by our deeds of charity.

One of the greatest difficulties that the friends of common schools have to contend with is, the thick darkness which prevails,—into which, very often, too few rays of light as yet penetrate, to render the darkness which prevails at all visible.

Perhaps it will not be denied, that however excellent many of our remote country schools may be, the probability of success in an attempt to elevate particular schools, is greater in what are frequently called the *central* schools of our towns and villages, and in our city schools than elsewhere. I do not say they are *better* as a general fact, than our country schools; but I do think that our chance of immediately elevating them is greater. It is so for several reasons. 1st. The teachers are apt to be men and women of more enlarged and disciplined minds. 2d. Both the teachers and parents read more on the subject of education, especially from our periodicals. 3d. What is a consequence of the two former, parents and teachers are more accessible, and more willing to receive gratefully the gratuitous labors or charities which may be bestowed.

Now in view of these facts and considerations, I am about to make a public call for the bestowment of charities. Not as the agent of any public association. Not as a public teacher or preacher on this subject, but as a plain, practical, but uninterested individual. Not in these times of commercial difficulty, for money. But what I am about to call for is the bestowal of a little time on our common schools, especially those of our cities, towns, and villages.

And first, I call upon physicians. I know their duties are arduous and fatiguing, and that it will cost them some sacrifice, and a good deal of self-denial, to comply with my request. But they have spare hours and half hours at times; and I entreat them to make a donation of some of these to common schools. Without disparagement to other deeds and objects of charity, I could assure them that the call on them for donations or contributions of this sort, is exceedingly imperious. I know of no class of men who can do more for our schools than they, unless it is ministers of the gospel, and it is doubtful whether they can, as things now are.

Is it doubted whether the charities of physicians would be acceptable? Let every doubt be removed. I can assure them from actual observation, that if they use that plain common sense, which they are so much accustomed to use in the rest of their intercourse with mankind, their reception will be cordial.

Their first step should be to get acquainted with teachers. Let them not, however, be *over* formal in this matter. Let them *introduce* themselves at once. Then, after one or two calls, perhaps at the very first, let them modestly state their object. There is not one teacher in ten, in our cities, towns, and villages, who will not feel himself honored by their acquaintance, and who will not embrace so excellent an opportunity for receiving instruction at their hands.

To those, however, who have not been in the habit of bestowing charities of this sort, one caution may be necessary. It is not to attempt too much at once. "Make haste slowly." The reason for this caution is, 1. Teachers are not so well prepared for their instructions as medical men may be apt to suppose. 2. Whether well or ill-prepared, they will be most profited by receiving but little information at a time. They need "precept upon precept," "line upon line."

When an intimacy is sufficiently formed, or rather when a door for instruction is sufficiently opened, the physician may proceed, in a modest manner, to give information in regard to temperature, ventilation, exercise, recreation, &c. Or, if the teacher seems more ready to converse on points which concern intellectual rather than physical or moral instruction, he may begin with that, gradually proceeding to the others, as he has opportunity, or can awaken the interest of the teacher. His great object, as a medical man—his ultimate object, I mean—will be to give instruction concerning physical education and management.

Although it will be necessary to visit the teacher at his school room during the early part of the acquaintance, yet to avoid being the occasion of too much hindrance in the usual routine of exercises, it may be well to have a part of the general conversation with him, at his boarding-house. Such in particular as the necessary conversation on the most proper temperature of a school-room, the necessity and manner of ventilation, and the kind and amount of exercise which is ne-

cessary. For, strange as it may seem to those medical men who have not been familiar with these works of charity, a very large proportion of our teachers need information on all these points.

Many a teacher does not know, for example, whether 60° to 65° of Fahrenheit's thermometer is the most appropriate temperature, or whether 65° to 70° would be better; or whether a room should be any hotter at one hour of the day than another; or whether the degree of temperature in the school room should be the same when the degree without is 5° below zero, as when it is 50° or 75° above. Or whether he should be governed, always, by the sensations and apparent comfort of the pupils. Or, lastly, what are the evils of having a temperature too high. Some teachers, even in our villages, hardly know the use of a thermometer; and they even express surprise when they first learn from the medical visitor that it is as necessary in a school-room as a clock, and even more so.

There are enlightened city teachers, who, though they understand very well, the subject of temperature, have no correct ideas in regard to the nature or necessity of ventilation. In one of the principal cities of this State, about ten years ago, a gentleman who had visited one of the school-rooms on a very hot day of midsummer, said to the teacher, on retiring, that while he was very much pleased in general, he could not but wish the school-room was so situated as to admit of a more free ventilation. The air, he said, was not quite so good as it should be. "You must certainly be mistaken," said the teacher, "for there is not a cooler school-room in the city." As if the air of a school-room which was cool could not be impure. Whereas, at the very moment when she spoke, the whole atmosphere of the room was loaded with carbonic acid gas, as well as other impurities, and the suffering of some of the children was already extreme. The visitor retired with an aching heart, and only consoled himself by reflecting that the teacher and pupils would soon follow him, and thus be relieved for that day.

But this teacher was not alone at that period. I will not say, that teachers are not wiser now than they were ten years ago; but I strongly suspect there are some who yet need a great deal of instruction on this highly important subject of ventilation. Facilities for ventilation, as school-houses are now constructed, I know are few; but still something might be done were its necessity fully understood.

This sort of instruction is more necessary in the schools of our cities and villages, than elsewhere; because, in the first place, these schools are generally large; and because, in the second place, the air from without, in its best estate, is apt to be less pure and healthful than it is in the country. And, as it often is, that where, in the arrangement of Divine Providence, we are exposed to evil, there we most readily find the appropriate antidote, so it is in the circumstances to which I have alluded. In the vicinity of those very school-houses which so much call for the bestowment of the charities of which I have been speaking, we find the very individuals, in greatest numbers, who have in their possession the appropriate relief! There is often, too, some one or more who has the necessary leisure, as well as the necessary philanthropy. Let him only be informed of the good there is to be done, and there is good reason to believe he will do it. To him, at least, I venture or once, to make an appeal.

But he may not only give instruction in regard to temperature and ventilation; there is much for almost every teacher to learn of the intelligent medical man, in regard to exercise. It is not many years since I heard the question gravely put, in a Convention on education in Massachusetts, how often children in common schools needed to go out in the open air; and where I heard the opinion from a teacher, that he ought to go out at least once an hour, warmly opposed. Now, much may depend on a great variety of circumstances; but in the ordinary circumstances of ordinary school-rooms, unventilated as most of them are, a recess once an hour is not oftener than every judicious physician would advise.

Then as to the kind and amount of exercise, a wide field of inquiry is opened. The teacher who has ever learned the true value of information of this sort, will have much to enquire of the physician who has once volunteered his services.



## OBERLIN, OR THE TRIUMPHS OF EDUCATION.

Oberlin, however, had still some prejudices to encounter in carrying forward the education of this rude population. He desired to teach them better modes of cultivating their sterile soil; but they would not listen to him. 'What,' said they, with the common prejudice of all agricultural people in secluded districts, 'what could he know of crops, who had been bred in a town.' It was useless to reason with them; he instructed them by example. He had two large gardens near his parsonage, crossed by foot-paths. The soil was exceedingly poor; but he trenched and manured the ground, with a thorough knowledge of what he was about, and planted it with fruit-trees. The trees flourished, to the great astonishment of the peasants, and they at length entreated their pastor to tell them his secret. He explained his system, and gave them slips out of his nursery. Planting and grafting soon became the taste of the district, and in a few years, the bare and desolate cottages were surrounded by smiling orchards. The potatoes of the canton, the chief food of the people, had so degenerated, that the fields yielded the most scanty produce. The peasants maintained that the ground was in fault: Oberlin, on the contrary, procured new seed. The soil of the mountains was really peculiarly favorable to the cultivation of this root, and the good minister's crop, of course, succeeded. The force of example was again felt, and abundance of potatoes soon returned to the canton. In like manner, Oberlin introduced the culture of Dutch clover and flax, and at length overcame the most obstinate prejudice, in converting unprofitable pastures into arable land. Like all agricultural improvers, he taught the people the value of manure, and the best modes of reducing every substance into useful compost.—The maxim which he incessantly repeated was, 'let nothing be lost.' He established an agricultural society, and founded prizes for the most skilful farmers. In ten years from his acceptance of the pastoral office in the Ban de la Roche, he had opened communications between each of the five parishes in the canton and with Strasbourg, introduced some of the most useful arts into a district where they had been utterly neglected, and raised the agriculture of these poor mountaineers from a barbarous tradition into a practical science. Such were some of the effects of education in the most comprehensive sense of the word.

The instruction which Oberlin afforded to the adults of his canton was only just as much as was necessary to remove the most pressing evils of their outward condition, and to impress them with a deep sense of religious obligation. But his education of the young had a wider range. When he entered on his ministry, the hut which his predecessor had built, was the only school-house of the five villages composing the canton. It had been constructed of unseasoned logs, and was soon in a ruinous condition. *The people, however, would not hear of a new building; the log house had answered very well, and was good enough for their time.* Oberlin was not to be so deterred from the pursuit of his benevolent wishes. He applied to his friends at Strasbourg, and took upon himself a heavy pecuniary responsibility. A new building was soon completed at Waldbach, and in a few years, the inhabitants in the other four parishes came voluntarily forward to build a school-house in each of the villages. Oberlin engaged zealously in the preparation of masters for these establishments, which were to receive all the children of the district when of a proper age. But he also carried the principle of education farther than it had ever before gone in any country. He was the founder of *Infant schools*; he saw, that almost from the cradle children were capable of instruction; that evil habits began much earlier than the world had been accustomed to believe; and that the facility with which mature education might be conducted, greatly depended upon the impressions which the reason and the imagination of infants might receive. He appointed *conductresses* in each commune, paid at his own expense; and established rooms, where children from two to six years old might be instructed and amused; and he thus gave the model of those beautiful institutions which have first shewn us how the happiness of a child may be associated with its improvement, and how knowledge, and the discipline which leads to knowledge, are not necessarily

*'Harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose.'*

The children in these little establishments, were not kept 'from morn till noon, from noon to dewy eve,' over the horn-book and primer. They learnt to knit, and sew, and spin; and when they were weary, they had pictures to look at, and maps, engraved on wood, for their special use, of their own canton, of Alsace, of France, and of Europe; they sang songs and hymns; and they were never suffered to speak a word of *patois*. This last regulation shews the practical wisdom of their instructor.

When the children of the Ban de la Roche, the children of peasants, be it remembered, who a few years before the blessing of such a pastor as Oberlin was bestowed upon them, were not only steeped

*'Up to the very lips in poverty.'*

but were groping in that darkness of the understanding which too often accompanies extreme indigence—when these children were removed to the higher schools, which possessed the most limited funds, when compared with almost the meanest of our parochial endowments for education, they were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, astronomy, sacred and profane history, agriculture, natural history, especially botany, natural philosophy, music, and drawing. Oberlin reserved for himself, almost exclusively, the religious instruction of this large family; and he established a weekly meeting of all the scholars at Waldbach. The inhabitants of Strasbourg and the neighbouring towns, from which the Ban de la Roche had been recently cut off, came to look upon the wonders which one man had effected. Subscriptions poured in upon the disinterested pastor; endowments were added. Well did he use this assistance. He founded a valuable library for the use of the children; he printed a number of the best school-books for their particular instruction; he made a collection of philosophical and mathematical instruments; he established prizes for masters and scholars; he published an almanack, which he gave to his people, in the preface to which is the following passage:

*'In your common almanacks, you find and pay for a number of incomprehensible things; for others absolutely useless; and for others contrary to the commands of God—such as prognostics of the weather, nativities, predictions from the planets according to birth-days, lucky and unlucky days, or good or bad omens. This new almanack is divested of such nonsense.'*

Thus did this extraordinary man strive to raise the intellectual standard of his parishioners, whilst he labored to preserve the purity of their morals, and the strength of their piety. Never did religion present more attractive features than in the secluded districts of the Ban de la Roche. The love of God was constantly inculcated as a rule of life; but the principle was enforced with no ascetic desire to separate it from the usefulness and the enjoyment of existence. The studies in which these poor children were trained contributed as much to their happiness as to their knowledge. They were not confined for years, as the boys and girls of our parish schools, to copying large text and small hand, to learning by rote the one spelling book, to hammering at the four rules of arithmetic, without understanding their principles, or their more practical applications.

The children of Oberlin's schools were taught whatever could be useful to them in their pastoral and agricultural life, and whatever could enable them to extract happiness out of their ordinary pursuits. They were incited to compose short essays on the management of the farm and the orchard; they were led into the woods to search for indigenous plants, to acquire their names, and to cultivate them in their own little gardens; they were instructed in the delightful art of copying these flowers from nature; it was impressed upon their minds, that as they lived in a district separated by mountains from the rest of mankind; and moreover a district naturally sterile, it was their peculiar duty to contribute something towards the general prosperity; and thus, previously to receiving religious confirmation, Oberlin required a certificate that the young person had planted two trees. Trees were to be planted, roads were to be put into good condition and ornamented, to please Him 'who rejoices when we labor for the public good.'

In the course of twenty years, the population of the Ban de la Roche had increased to six times the number that Oberlin found them when he entered upon his charge. The knowledge which their pastor gave to the people gave them also the means of living, and the increase of their means increased their numbers. The good minister found employment for all. In addition to their agricultural pursuits, he taught the people straw-plaiting, knitting, and dyeing with the plants of the country. In the course of years, Mr. Legrand, of Basle, a wealthy and philanthropic manufacturer, who had been a director of the Helvetic republic, introduced the weaving of silk ribbons into the district.

*'Conducted by Providence,'* says this gentleman, 'into this remote valley, I was the more struck with the sterility of its soil, its straw-thatched cottages, the apparent poverty of its inhabitants, and the simplicity of their fare, (chiefly consisting of potatoes,) from the contrast which these external appearances formed to the cultivated conversation which I enjoyed with almost every individual I met whilst traversing its five villages, and the frankness and naivete of the children who extended to me their little hands. . . . It is now four years since I removed here with my little family; and the pleasure of residing in the midst of a people whose manners are softened, and whose minds are enlightened by the instructions which they receive from their earliest infancy, more than reconciles us to the privations which we must necessarily experience in a valley separated from the rest of the world by a chain of surrounding mountains.'

An English visitor of the Ban de la Roche says:

*'If you go into a cottage, they quite expect you will eat and drink with them; a clean cloth is laid upon a table, and the new mill hand*

the wine, and the great loaf of bread are brought out; yet they are, in reality, exceedingly poor.'

The authoress of 'the Memoirs,' says:

'When a poor father or mother died, leaving a numerous family, it was a thing of course, for some poor person to offer to take upon himself the charge and care of the orphans, so that many of the households contained one or two of these adopted children, and they seldom thought of mentioning that they were not their own.'

The difficulties which the pastor of Waldbach surmounted, should be a lesson of encouragement to every man similarly circumstanced, and especially to the clergy of all denominations. In our own country, too, we have seen ministers devote themselves to their duty with a zeal not less than that of Oberlin, but with success, it is true, often disproportioned to their efforts, owing to circumstances over which they had no control. In the midst of privation, they have been supported by the consciousness of honest intention, and the faithful discharge of their sacred duty. Let the example of Oberlin encourage them in their honorable course. That man had no splendid wages for the Christian office, to pamper him into luxurious indolence, and a want of sympathy for those by whom he was surrounded. That man did not shut himself up in his closet throughout the week, to harden his heart and narrow his understanding, by poring over polemics, which would have been useless to his flock, even if they had been intelligible; nor did he foster his pride, with that, miscalled learning, till his ignorance of things around him was palpable to all except himself. That man did not mix in the angry strifes of political discussion; but even in the heat of the French Revolution, proclaimed that 'public happiness constitutes private happiness, and that every individual ought, therefore, to live for the public good.' Oberlin bestowed his time, talents, his learning, his little property, without stint, upon his little flock—we have seen how successfully. He had a reward which no selfish indolence can approach, and no petty vanity can estimate. In the fullness of his heart, the venerable man, looking around upon the valleys which he had filled with the peacefulness of contented industry, and upon the people whom he had trained to knowledge, and to virtue, the best fruit of knowledge, exclaimed, 'Yes! I am happy.' And when he died, he was followed to the grave by an entire population, upon whom he, a poor but industrious and benevolent clergyman, had showered innumerable blessings, the least of which the idle and self-indulging lord of thousands has neither the grace to will, nor the spirit to bestow.

#### COMMON EDUCATION SHOULD BE THE BEST EDUCATION.

We utterly repudiate, as unworthy, not of freemen only, but of men, the narrow notion, that there is to be an education for the poor as such. Has God provided for the poor a coarser earth, a thinner air, a paler sky? Does not the glorious sun pour down his golden flood as cheerily upon the poor man's hovel, as upon the rich man's palace? Have not the cotter's children as keen a sense of all the freshness, verdure, fragrance, melody, and beauty of luxuriant nature as the pale sons of kings? Or is it on the mind that God has stamped the imprint of a baser birth, so that the poor man's child knows, with an inborn certainty, that his lot is to crawl, not climb?

'It is not so. God has not done it. Man cannot do it. Mind is immortal. Mind is imperial. It bears no mark of high or low, rich or poor. It needs no bound of time or place of rank or circumstance. It asks but freedom. It requires but light. It is heaven born, and it aspires to heaven. Weakness does not enfeeble it. Poverty cannot repress it. Difficulties do but stimulate its vigor. And the poor tallow-chandler's son, that sits up all the night to read the book which an apprentice lends him, lest the master's eye should miss it in the morning shall stand and treat with kings, shall add new provinces to the domain of science, shall bind the lightning with a hempen cord, and bring it harmless from the skies. The Common School is common, not as inferior, not as the school for poor men's children, but as the light and air are common. It ought to be the best school, because it is the first school; and in all good works the beginning is one half. Who does not know the value to community of a plentiful supply of the pure element of water? And infinitely more than this is the instruction of the Common School; for it is the fountain at which the mind drinks, and is refreshed and strengthened for its career of usefulness and glory.'—*Bishop Doane.*

#### INFLUENCE OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS ON COMMON SCHOOLS.

One serious obstacle in the way of this improvement is, the little interest taken by the most enlightened part of the community, we speak it with regret, in the condition of the common schools, from the circumstance that their own children are receiving education in private schools at their own expense. This naturally leads to a remissness and neglect, which can by no means be justified, on the part of those who are most strongly bound by every consideration to concern themselves in the improvement of education. The number of scholars in private schools appears by the returns to be twenty-seven thousand two hundred and sixty-six, while the whole number of children in the State, between the ages of four and sixteen years, stands in the returns, one hundred and seventy-seven thousand and fifty-three. From the nature of our political institutions, these thirty thousand will not control the political destiny of the hundred and eighty thousand, thirty years hence, but just the reverse. The five-sixths will fix the standard of taste, of morality, and of general conduct, to which the one sixth will conform, and above which very few only, with infinite labor, can raise themselves. The five-sixths will possess the legislative authority, elect the executive, and thereby fill the judiciary, according to their own notions of expediency and right. They are to have, then, the disposal of property, life, and liberty for their generation, and are so to mould and modify the institutions of their country as powerfully to influence, for good or evil, the generation that shall come after them. Could they be left, as happily they cannot be, to grow up in political and moral profligacy, in the unrestrained indulgence of their bad passions, an individual, or a class of men, of superior wealth and education, would be merely at their mercy, a feather upon a stormy sea. No man is independent of the public immediately about him. He is elevated by its good influences, even though his early education was defective. He is debased by the daily spectacle and contact of debasement, and, though fitted for better things, generally sinks into the surrounding mass of corruption. If there be any who are deaf to the voice of patriotism, philanthropy, and duty, let them at least regard the welfare of their own offspring. The public opinion of our times is the moral atmosphere which we all breathe in common. If it be wholesome, it invigorates and sustains us; if poisonous, we all languish, and the feeble perish. How imperative the obligation, and grateful the task to preserve its purity; how fatal its contamination, and how censurable is their supineness through whose fault we are put in peril.

We are all embarked in one bottom, and must sink or swim together. Will not the sharp-sighted look to it, that the ship be sea-worthy, and preclude betimes avoidable dangers.

The amount paid for tuition in private schools, for one-sixth of the children of the state, is three hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars; while the amount raised by taxes for the education of the other five-sixths in public schools is four hundred and sixty-five thousand, and the amount voluntarily contributed to the public schools is forty-eight thousand dollars. If these sums were added together, and the whole eight or nine hundred thousand dollars were judiciously applied to common school education, it cannot be doubted, that all the children might receive a higher order of instruction than now falls to the lot of the favored sixth part.

If private schools were discountenanced, and those who now support them would turn their attention to the improvement of our common schools, the additional funds turned into this channel would be but a small part of the benefit derived from the alteration. Those who set the highest value on education, and are determined at all costs to secure its blessings to their own children, instead of standing aloof from the general concerns, as too many of them now do, would be foremost in their zeal for the district schools, acting on committees, visiting the schools, selecting the teachers, advising and assisting them, contributing to their support, and to the erection of better houses, and the purchase of better furniture, apparatus, and libraries. There would also be thrown into the district and town schools a class of scholars more thoroughly educated already at the private schools, whose example would give a quickening impulse to emulation; and, as those parents



who have been willing to pay for private tuition are generally those who take most pains with their children at home, these children would continue to impart a good influence to the rest of the school, even after the immediate effect of the first infusion. A combined effort will produce a wonderful improvement. The district school in the central village of the town will no longer be, as it often is, the poorest in its whole territory, but it will be elevated to the rank of a model for the rest, and they will all gladly profit by the opportunity for imitation.

As soon as those who have withdrawn their children because they were dissatisfied with the character of our common schools, come again to take a personal interest in their prosperity, there will be an active demand for better teachers. As soon as the fund now diverted to private schools is restored to this legitimate purpose, the means will be at hand for commanding the services of a higher order of teachers. It is notorious, that the small compensation paid in our public schools will not, as a general fact, induce men of talents and learning to take charge of them. The best instructors seek higher salaries in the private schools. But additional compensation will draw them back into the public service. The private schools, which would be surrendered for an energetic reform in the whole system, would in part supply the demand for better teachers.—*R. Rantoul's remarks on Education.*

#### CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF POPULAR EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

In this and the following number of the Journal we propose to give such information as we can collect from official documents, of what is doing in other States with regard to popular education. This was announced in our prospectus to be one of the objects of the Journal, and we feel that we cannot do the cause of education in Connecticut a greater service than by diffusing as widely as possible among intelligent and inquiring men a knowledge of the efforts now making, and the means resorted to in other states to elevate the character and increase the usefulness of common schools. It will be gratifying to those who have been laboring in various ways to excite a more intelligent interest in behalf of common school education in our midst, to see that the same means substantially, are resorted to, or proposed elsewhere. It will be seen too that similar evils in the actual condition of the schools, are complained of, and the same obstacles to improvement encountered.

#### EDUCATION IN VERMONT.

The policy of Despotie governments is to keep their subjects in ignorance of their rights as men, and of their physical and moral power. In this lies the foundation of their security. In a republic all power is inherent in the people, no individual is entitled to pre-eminence over his fellow, except for superior moral or intellectual attainments. The happiness and security of the people are the legitimate ends of all free government; and, as legislators, we ought to enquire how these can be most effectually secured.

The patriots, who established our government and framed the constitution of the State, evidently relied upon the dissemination of useful knowledge as the most efficient means to prevent the commission of crime, and lead to the practice of virtue. Among the earliest acts of the State were those establishing, providing for, and patronizing common schools. This policy has been steadily pursued to the present time. Liberal reservations were made for their aid and encouragement in all grants of land under the State government. In addition to the income of the public lands, sequestered from time to time for this object, towns were required to raise and expend large sums of money. A further addition to these means was made by applying the account of the surplus revenue of the United States, deposited with towns in 1836.

Our whole legislation, from the foundation of the government to this time, shows the importance which has always been attached to the interests of education as a means of adding to the virtue and happiness of the people and secur-

ing the permanency of our institutions. The intention appears clearly to have been to place within reach of the children of the humblest citizen the advantages of such instruction as is necessary to form their minds to virtue and morality, and fit them for usefulness. This is right, for it is plainly the duty of the State to guard the private as well as the public morals of its citizens. A judicious and enlightened course of instruction is the only effectual way to accomplish this object. If any apology be necessary for urging upon the consideration of the legislature a careful examination of the existing laws appertaining to our schools, it is to be found in my convictions of the inadequacy of their present provisions to accomplish the greatest good.

Taking it for granted that the public is under obligation to educate every child in the State, it would seem necessary that the burden of supporting our schools—or at least so much of it as is required to defray the expenses of teachers' salaries, be placed upon those who have the ability to pay,—or in other words, that the deficiency, after the application of the public money, be raised by a tax on the list of all taxable property in the district. This course has, in many places, been found highly beneficial, and where a contrary practice prevails, it is to be feared, many children are deprived of the advantages which the State designed. The present mode of distributing the public money, in proportion to the number of scholars between the ages of four and eighteen, does not, I apprehend, practically carry out the wise and benevolent intention of the framers of the law. It is respectfully suggested, that, if a certain part of the public funds in each town were divided equally among the districts, and the residue in proportion to the number of scholars, it would enable weaker districts to employ more competent teachers, and for a longer period, and at the same time tend to frugality and economy in districts of greater ability.

The act of 1836, provided for depositing the surplus revenue with towns, has received a construction, in some places, different from that intended, and caused delay and difficulty in the distribution. I would further suggest whether some system of direct accountability would not have a very happy influence on the prosperity of our common schools.

Should the select men in each town, or some other officer designated by law, be required, under a penalty, to make an annual report to some person authorized to receive the same, of the condition of the several schools in the town, the number of scholars between four and eighteen years of age, the number who have attended school within the year, the time a teacher has been employed, the amount of money expended for services of teachers, the amount of public money received, and the manner in which the balance expended over and above the public money has been raised, it would furnish more valuable information upon which to base future legislation. The want of a sufficient number of competent and well instructed teachers, is a great obstacle to the prosperity and usefulness of our common schools, and it may well be asked, if the legislature, as guardians of the public welfare, are not bound to adopt immediate measures to supply the deficiency.

The influences which our colleges and academies have had upon the standard of education, and manner of instruction in our schools, by furnishing teachers has been favorable. But the course of instruction and study, established in those institutions, is not expressly designed to prepare teachers, nor is it suited to call into action all those capabilities and peculiar qualifications so indispensably necessary to that employment.

Normal, or pattern schools, have in some places been established, where those intending to engage in teaching are subjected to a thorough course of instruction and training, expressly designed to fit them for the occupation. Were the business of teaching sufficiently lucrative to permit young men to prepare for, and engage in it permanently, this mode would undoubtedly be entitled to the preference. But in the present state of society, I apprehend that the establishment of teachers' seminaries, or the adoption of a suitable and separate course of instruction in some of our academies is the most feasible way in which this object can be accomplished. In some states this mode has been successfully adopted, and as the benefits of a system of this character must be generally diffused throughout the state, it certainly has strong claims upon our favor and support.

## OHIO.

*Third Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools.*

We are indebted to some friend at Columbus, for a copy of this valuable report, of Mr. Lewis. Like every thing from his pen which we have seen, it is a strait forward, business like document, and breathes throughout, an ardent and enlightened zeal for the cause of universal education. Mr. Lewis is honorably identified with the origin and progress of the present school system of Ohio, and in common with others, we regret to learn that he feels himself obliged to retire from the office which he has administered so efficiently from its first creation. His first report discussed with distinguished ability some of the soundest principles relative to an efficient system of public schools, and he had the good fortune to see most of them adopted in the law which was subsequently passed. The fundamental principle was omitted—upon which by securing the constant and vigilant co-operation and inspection of the people individually, the success of any public provision for the support of schools depends: viz., the condition that the state appropriation should be so made as to secure a like contribution for the township or district. The law seems to us a wise one in the main. It gives to the people the power to do their own business whether in township or districts, as the majority may think best. The widest possible latitude is given for popular action, and such popular action receives the aid of law to effect its purpose. The Ohio law recognizes the principle that the schools are common to all the youth in the state, 'thus securing,' in the language of Mr. Lewis, 'one spot where the equality on which our government is based theoretically, can be realized practically.' We respond cordially to this, but to realize this practically, the common schools must be made the best schools within the scope of their studies, or else they will soon become common in the sense of cheap, ordinary, inferior. There is one provision in this law which we should be rejoiced to see incorporated into our system; that which creates a *County Board of school examiners*. It would guard against the employment of improper and unqualified teachers and elevate the character of the profession. The Superintendent thus speaks of its practical working.

## MODE OF EXAMINING TEACHERS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE PROFESSION.

There is no one part of the law felt more in its beneficial influence than this. Most of the examiners continue to manifest the most laudable zeal and industry to promote the cause of sound education, and improve the character and elevate the profession of teachers.

There are a few cases of fault-finding, but in general, the present plan, I think is approved by the people and the great body of the enlightened teachers. The cases of difficulty have arisen by omitting to observe the law, and not because an observance of it necessarily involved trouble or embarrassment. With all the vigilance of these officers, instructors who are unqualified and immoral, sometimes impose themselves upon the people, but such cases are now rare and becoming less frequent every year.

The following suggestion commends itself to the good sense of the people of Connecticut.

## COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS.

I advert to this point to say my experience confirms me in the opinion, that there must ultimately be a county officer whose special business it shall be to attend to all school duties, if we intend to elevate our system to the proper standard. It is now a great embarrassment to be compelled to rely on officers, whose main attention is engrossed in other objects, and who accustom themselves to consider school duty as merely incidental. There are some good officers in reference to school duties, but some seem to think all their labor in this department gratuitous, and are far from furnishing proper aid in carrying into effect the school law. I am clearly of the opinion, that it would be a saving of expense to have such a county officer, and that it would essentially aid in rendering permanent and prosperous the cause of universal education.

## EDUCATION OF THE POOR.

While we have general objects in view, we should not forget those that are special, keeping in mind, that it is always best to make our public provision so general as to include all the parts if possible. It

has heretofore been a reproach to our state, that sufficient provision was not made for the education of the poor, and it was as late as last winter declared, that such provision was not even then made.

In a considerable part of the state the funds allow a free school to be taught for all the youth, from four to nine months in the year, and where there is a deficiency, it is paid by those who are able. In many country districts, there are none so poor as to be unable to defray their portion of the expense, but in some it is not so. In our towns and villages, poor are oftener met with, more especially poor widows with families of orphan children, and a class still more to be pitied, families abandoned by their unnatural head. As our population increases, towns and villages will increase; even now, our public roads present a vast number of these places, and every site for manufacturing will soon be thus occupied. It cannot be a reproach to admit the truth, and in doing so, we are compelled to say, that among our 600,000 youth, there are a vast number who are unable to educate themselves and defray other ordinary expenses required to sustain the places in society that our institutions assign them. Nominally we are equal; not a village in the state but has been repeatedly the theatre, where politicians and other orators proclaimed this equality, but a custom (admitted to be) has with more than legal sanction, assigned to each person a place in society chiefly in reference to external appearance. We should not hastily condemn that ambition on the part of the individual that causes the greatest effort to secure respectability, and if a wrong standard is fixed, it is the fault of the more wealthy and not of the poor; to reach this standard and support this appearance in society, requires constant toil and much of sacrifice on the part of those who labor for others and have no property of their own.

I have estimated the profits of labor and the expenses of a family in different parts of the state, until I am satisfied that he who depends on the labor of his hands only, for support, does not, in general, receive sufficient pay to support his family and educate his children; and wages are kept down to near the lowest sum that will afford a support, that we cannot look for general education unless public provision is made. But if the case last above named is truly stated, how much father removed from these advantages are those whose fathers lie in their graves, or live a burthen to themselves and society; for many such there are. We are often told that the poor should be glad to bind their children out, and no argument has sounded to me so revolting, so unchristian, so contrary to the spirit of humanity and philanthropy. It is to say, that the widowed mother shall have taken from her arms and her society, all that is left to her on earth of comfort; it is to say that to be a poor child, is to be a servant, a term that in its general acceptation never ought to be known in our state. It is true, many thus called, are used well, and of many others the contrary is equally true. If we had a class of society amongst us ranking as servants, who never aspire to any other condition, it would be different; but the poor are too often mocked with the shadow of better things, until their disappointment brings conviction of their actual condition and makes them poor indeed. Four fifths of those who become outcasts from society in early life, are made so by the unkindly influence of society and our institutions.

I do not say, that merely a system of common schools would supply all the defect and prevent the evil, but I suggest this as one of the means that should be used on a much more extensive plan than any now in practice, and believing that the great object of government should be, to protect the weak and promote the happiness of the people, it would seem proper, while so much is done to add to the value of property, that at least as much should be done to increase the happiness of persons; nor would any price be too great for the rescue of the thousands of youth from the ruin that awaits them, merely from the want of a little more parental care on the part of the government.

Connecticut may congratulate herself that she has done more than any other state to place the education of the poor, which is the most essential service that can be rendered them, beyond the reach of contingencies. It only remains to be seen that this provision accomplishes the great end—the education of the whole people, thoroughly. This can only be done by good teachers and parental co-operation.

## DISPUTES AND LITIGATIONS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

There is and always has been a variety of little disputes springing up in the districts, in reference to district lines, levying building taxes, &c. &c. These questions are generally raised by litigious persons, and involve no small difficulty and expense. It is not often of any great importance which way the point is settled, but it is important to settle it some way to avoid ill-blood and expense. I would again recommend, that all these questions should be referred to your superintendent. The county officer can easily reduce the who matter to paper, and forward it to this office, and though this officer may be no better able, without advice, to decide right than the direc-



tor, it would arrest expensive litigation, and equity would as often prevail as in courts. Scarcely any question can now arise that has not, in some part of the state been settled by legal adjudication. These decisions being collected, with the advice of persons competent to judge, the state officer would be enabled to determine correctly. The course here recommended, is adopted in Pennsylvania and New York with very good effect and prevents all litigation.

A provision of a similar character is needed in our law, and would save much expense, and much bitter and corroding legislation.

#### GENERAL STATE OF EDUCATION.

Whatever we may find to cause regret to the patriot and christian by reason of deficiency in quantity and quality of education, or whatever difficulties may exist in particular places, there is nothing more evident than a general increase and improvement in this department. This is not confined to any one class of schools, but extends to all; there is more attention paid to the character and competency of the teacher—more disposition to encourage good teachers by allowing reasonable salaries; the number of schools is increased, and they are kept open longer than formerly. The standard of education is raised from common schools in almost every county in the state, and even where opposition is rife; attention is awakened and improvement goes on in the most important work of education among the people. This is producing its natural consequences. Academies are coming forward of an improved character, both in morals and literature, beyond them still, all our colleges are in a more prosperous condition than at any former period.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Influenced by circumstances not under my own control, I shall retire from all official connection with the state educational department during your session; but whatever an humble individual in private life can do, with all the time and influence that God may give him, shall still be devoted to the cause of universal education, with a firm conviction that it is the only barrier which can be presented to save the country and its liberty from the ruin that has swept away every other free government. And I would fain press on my countrymen the fact, that we cannot occupy middle ground; we must either rise rapidly, and occupy a place higher than any nation that has preceded us, or we must soon cease to enjoy our peculiar principles; and though wealth may flow in, palaces rise, and our national greatness be the envy of the world, unless the means of education are furnished and the system nurtured beyond what any other country has ever done, we must, as a mass, become hewers of wood and bearers of burdens for the few, who by cunning or force, are able to control the employments of the people and the means of subsistence. But I do trust, Heaven has in store a greater and more glorious destiny for my beloved country, and in full faith of a continued and increasing prosperity and happiness of the people, this report is respectfully submitted.

SAMUEL LEWIS.

Supt. Common Schools of Ohio.

The following extracts are from the appendix:—

#### FEMALE TEACHERS.

The number of male teachers in the aggregate, exceeds that of females. In the northern counties, the schools to say the least, are as good as in any counties in the state, and their practice is to employ females for teaching the small children. These counties are not surpassed in educational enterprise by any counties in the state, and by availing themselves of the help of female teachers, they are able to do twice as much with the same money as is done in those counties where female teachers are almost excluded. As the business of teaching is made more respectable, more females engage in it, and the wages are reduced. Females do not in the northern counties, expect to accumulate much property by this occupation; if it affords them a respectable support and a situation where they can be useful, it is as much as they demand. I therefore, most earnestly commend this subject to the attention of those counties who are in the habit of paying men for instructing little children, when females would do it for less than half the sum, and generally much better than men can. Those counties that have large school funds could by a judicious expenditure keep their free schools open, at least eight months in the year.

#### SCHOOL HOUSES.

In 691 townships, 731 school houses have been built this year, at a cost of \$148,959, being \$204 each, and if we suppose that as many in proportion have been erected in the non-reporting townships, it will present evidence of public sentiment and public educational enterprise that has no parallel out of Ohio, and it proves more than any thing else what the public feeling is on this subject. It is true, some of these houses have cost but little, but we should take into view, that it is harder in some districts to expend \$20 for a school house, than in others to expend \$10,000.

I am informed that a large number of school houses have been voted for the present year, in addition to those reported.

#### ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED SCHOOL RETURNS.

The reports show that 691 townships have reported, the number of districts in which, is 5,442.

The number of common schools taught the past year, is 7,295.

The number of teachers, male and female, 7,288.

The number of scholars in attendance the past year, 254,617.

The whole number of months common schools have been, open the past year, 29,199.

The number of common school houses erected this year 731

Cost of the same \$148,959.

The amount of wages paid teachers in common schools during the past year, \$392,091.

Making the same estimate for the 545 towns not reported, it will give for the non-reporting townships the following statements:

Number of common schools in the non-reporting townships	5,754
Number of teachers	5,575
Number of scholars in attendance	200,815
Amount of wages paid teachers	\$309,247
Number of months taught	23,030
Number of school houses built	577
Cost of school houses	\$117,486

These items added to those of the reporting townships, give the following results:

Whole number of common schools in the state	13,049
Whole number of teachers employed	12,860
Whole number of scholars in attendance	455,427
Amount of wages paid teachers	\$701,338
Whole number of months common schools have been taught	52,229
Number of school houses built the past year	1,308
Cost of school houses built	\$206,445

This shows an average of four month's school in each district, and of thirty-five scholars in each school.

The average wages of the teachers per month, is \$13 43. But more than two fifths of the teachers are females, who do not receive an average of over \$10 00 per month, (though some females receive much more.) This would leave to the male teachers an average of say \$16 per month.

Since the above extracts were in type, we have received Mr. Lewis' letter to Gov. Shannon, tendering his resignation of the office of superintendent on the ground of impaired health. He says:

He who fills this department with honor to himself and usefulness to his country, will need to have health sufficient to sustain him under severe physical labor one half the year, and a constant attention to office duties the other half. Painful experience has convinced me, that to attempt to perform these duties fully, would but destroy my remaining strength without doing essential service to the cause of education. I have been for want of strength, compelled to leave undone much that should have been done during the past year. Could I believe that the future progress of popular education depended essentially on my continuance, I would most gladly sacrifice my own comfort and safety to a cause so dear to every true patriot and christian. But I take this occasion to repeat, that after ten years of close attention to this subject, and very general acquaintance with the people, I believe there is no opinion on which there is such a general agreement as that in favor of universal education.

I cannot pass this opportunity without pressing the importance of making an educational department in this state permanent. This is demanded by a strict regard to the preservation and economical disbursement of the different school funds as well as to promote the cause of popular education.

We expend millions to increase the value of property, but of what avail is that to the orphan and the poor who have no property to be improved. If the whole energies of the state are directed to the accumulation of individual or associated wealth to the neglect of persons and the rights of persons, (for I hold education to be a right,) certainly a large class must fail to receive that equal participation in the blessings of a free country that we profess to furnish for all. The many thousands of our youth who demand education at our hands, have no way of enforcing their claim now, and their very weakness should be a powerful argument in their favor. If we neglect our duty towards them, there is nothing more certain than that they, with ourselves and our common country, shall be involved in one common ruin.

It gives me great pleasure to know that you, sir, as the Executive of one of the great states, agree with me fully on this subject, and it is encouraging to the friends of the people, that for many years past no man has been elevated to that high trust, who has either by personal or official influence opposed the truly democratic doctrine of free education for a free people, and I pray God, that your efforts in this cause may be successful.

But one thing is now needed to put the system into the most ex-

tensive operation, and that is, the individual action of those who are friendly to the object, and know how to advance it. Men enough are found to fill offices of honor or profit, in either church or state; associations can be formed for almost any purpose, but it is extremely difficult to find those, who in the true spirit of christian philanthropy, are willing to go about doing good for the simple consideration of doing good. Could a small part of those who have both time and talents for this work, be induced to set about it in earnest, independent of sects and parties, the most extensive benefits would be conferred on our common country.

#### SOUTH CAROLINA.

We have not seen Gov. Noble's annual message, but we have received a copy of a report of Professor Elliott and Thornwell, on the Free School System made to the Governor at his request and by him submitted to the Legislature. From the remarks contained in the report it is very evident nothing like a system of common schools as we understand here in New England, prevails in South Carolina. Their free schools spoken of are professedly school poor, such as in the main, all public schools are likely to become unless they are both *good* and *cheap*, so as to meet the wants of the rich and the poor. We make a few extracts:

The difficulties in the way of an effective Free School System, are of two kinds, physical and moral. The physical difficulties are the sparseness of the population, the great extent of country over which a limited appropriation has to extend, and the sickness of particular sections of the State. The moral difficulties are the carelessness of the poor about the education of their children, the selfishness which leads them to prefer their labor to their improvement, and the foolish pride, which prevents them from receiving that as a bounty, which they cannot procure in any better way.

We need not the Northern systems, for our white population, that requires the help of government, is too small to call for the sacrifice of a higher education, on the part of the great body of the people, by the expenditure of a large amount of money, on the part of the State; one or the other of which consequences must be the result of the adoption of any Common School System upon a scale commensurate with the whole white population of the State; for any general System of Schools, except it be maintained at an expense equal to the highest moneyed rate of instruction, while it extends the benefits, inevitably lowers the standard of education.

We would therefore recommend as the first step in the revival of the Free School system of the State, that there should be elected by the Legislature, a Superintendent of Free Schools, holding his office for four years, and re-eligible, with the salary of a Circuit Judge, whose duty it should be to devote his whole time to the arrangement and superintendence of the Free Schools of the State, and be the responsible organ of communication between them and the Legislature. The information which such an officer, and such an officer only, could give to the Legislature, of the number and position of the poor children in the respective districts of the State, of the difficulties to be overcome in each particular case, and of the operation of the system under varying circumstances, could enable it, in a few years, to rectify most of the evils which are acknowledged to exist, but which many of the Commissioners attribute rather to the improper execution of the Acts than the system itself. We have recommended a high salary, and a tenure of office of some years duration, because we think them necessary for the procuring an officer of the character, and the acquirements, requisite to fill such a station.

The Free School System was organized mainly for the benefit of the orphans and indigent children of the State and the approbation should be distributed with a distinct view to that object.

We would recommend in the fourth place, but this we do with some hesitation, the establishment in one of the healthy Districts of the State, of a Teacher's Seminary. We doubt whether a proper supply of Teachers for Free Schools can be obtained in any other way. The only expenditure which it would require, would be the salary of a Teacher, or Teachers, and the erection of buildings suitable for such an establishment. Those who went there, ought to be expected to support themselves during their term of preparation. Many doubtless would be sustained by private charity; and others would invest their little inheritance in what would eventually prove a certain and respectable profession.

The Legislature should insist, we think, in the provisions of its Act, that the Bible should be a Text Book in all of its Schools, and that religion should be more or less incorporated into its system of instruction. Knowledge, unless it be accompanied by virtue, and the highest virtue is the fruit of religion, may only quicken the vice it was intended to eradicate, and sharpen for the crimes it was design-

ed to prevent. Besides, it would be adopting as a reading book, the best model of idiomatic English, and only beginning in the Schools, what is afterwards carried on in your higher places of education.

#### MASSACHUSETTS.

##### EXTRACT FROM GOV. MORTON'S MESSAGE.

The education of the people, is a subject which has commanded so much of the public consideration, and been so often and so ably presented to successive legislatures, that it will not fail to command your earliest attention and most anxious deliberations. Its importance in a democratic government, which must be sustained by the intelligence and virtue of the people, cannot be too highly appreciated. The system of free schools which has been transmitted from generation to generation, has improved in its progress, and is now in a high degree of perfection. But it is capable of still further improvement. Recently, great labor has been bestowed upon, and great advancement made in, some departments of education. But the very improvements in the higher branches, and in the more elevated seminaries, excite the ambition and engross the attention of those most active in the cause of education, and thus expose the common schools to fall into neglect and disrepute. To arouse that strong and universal interest in them, which is so necessary to their utility and success, an interest that should pervade both parents and children, the responsibility of their management should rest upon the inhabitants of the towns. And the more immediately they are brought under the control of those for whose benefit they are established, and at whose expense they are supported, the more deep and active will be the feelings engendered in their favor, and the more certain and universal will be their beneficial agency. In the town and district meetings, those little pure democracies, where our citizens first learn the rudiments and the practical operation of free institutions, may safely and rightfully be placed the direction and the government of these invaluable seminaries. In my opinion, the main efforts and the most unceasing vigilance of the government should be directed to the encouragement of the primary schools. These are the fountains whence should flow the knowledge that should enlighten, and the virtue that should preserve, our free institutions. Let them ever be kept free and pure. The instruction of the common mind should be the common concern. Let the whole people be educated and brought up to the standard of good citizens and intelligent and moral members of society. Let the government care for those who have no one else to care for them. The poor, the weak, the depressed and the neglected, have the greatest need of the protecting arm and succoring hand of the Commonwealth. Let the children of such be deemed the children of the republic, and furnished with suitable means of instruction, that their powers mental and physical, may be developed, and they be converted into ornaments and blessings to the community. Let the town schools be open to all, and made so respectable and so useful, that all may desire to enter them. The district school, properly governed and instructed, is a nursery of democratic sentiments. It strikingly illustrates, the fundamental principle of our government. There before the pride of family or wealth, or other adventitious distinction has taken deep root in the young heart, assemble upon a perfect level, children of all circumstances and situations in life. There they learn that rewards and honors do not depend upon accidental advantages, but upon superior diligence, good conduct and improvement. There they have practically written upon their tender minds, too deeply to be obliterated by the after occurrences and changes of life, the great principles of equal rights, equal duties and equal advantages.

It is the illumination of the universal mind that is the sure foundation of democracy. It is the elevation of every rational soul into moral and intellectual consciousness and dignity, that is to carry onward improvements in our social and civil institutions. To this end should be directed the highest aims and efforts of the legislature.

##### SUMMARY OF THE MASS. SCHOOL LAW.

One of the earliest acts of legislation of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, was a law making it obligatory on parents to educate their own children and apprentices: Harvard College was founded in 1636; and in 1647 the colony provided by law for the support of schools at the public expense, for instruction in reading and writing, in every town containing fifty families, and for the support of a grammar school (the instructor of which should be competent to prepare young men for the University) in every town containing one hundred families.

The requisitions of the law, as it now stands, are substan-



tially as follows:—Towns containing fifty families or householders are required to maintain a school or schools for terms of time which shall together be equivalent to six months in each year, in which children shall be instructed in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and good behavior, by teachers of competent ability and good morals.

In towns of one hundred families or householders, schools of the same kind are to be kept for terms which together shall be equivalent to twelve months.

In towns of one hundred and fifty families or householders, schools of the same kind, and not less than two, are to be kept for terms not less than nine months each, or three or more schools for terms together equivalent to eighteen months.

In towns of five hundred families, similar schools, not less than two, are to be kept for twelve months each, or three or more such schools for terms together equivalent to twenty-four months; and, in addition to the above, they are required to maintain a school for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town, ten months at least, exclusive of vacations, in each year, in which the history of the United States, book keeping, surveying, geometry, and algebra shall be taught by a master of competent ability and good morals. And if the town contain four thousand inhabitants, the teacher shall, in addition to all the branches above enumerated, be competent to instruct in the Latin and Greek languages, general history, rhetoric and logic.

The schools provided for by the law are open to children of all classes, and the expense of maintaining them is paid by a tax on the people, raised chiefly on their property. Each town is made responsible for the execution of the law within its own jurisdiction; and it is the duty of the school committee (which consists of five persons chosen annually by the town) to overlook the schools, to visit them at least once in six months, to employ and approve the instructors, and to direct in the selection of school-books.

The school committee are further required to make annually a detailed report of the condition of the several public schools in their respective towns with suggestions for their improvement, which report must be read in open town meeting and an attested copy thereof transmitted to the Secretary of State, together with official returns showing the number or name of every school—the whole number of scholars in each, in summer and winter—the average attendance—the length of each school—the number of teachers, their sex and compensation—list of books, and amount of money raised by tax to support schools, &c. &c.

The income of the school fund is apportioned and distributed to each town according to the number of children between the ages of four and sixteen, on condition that the above requisitions of the law respecting the school returns and reports have been complied with, and a sum equal to one dollar and twenty-five cents, for each person between the ages of four and sixteen, has been raised by taxation for the support of schools, including only fuel, wages and board of teachers.

The Board of Education composed of the Governor, Lieut. Governor, and eight others appointed by the governor and senate are required to make out an annual abstract of the school returns, and to ascertain and report to the legislature the actual condition and efficiency of the common schools and other means of popular education, and to diffuse as widely as possible, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young. To accomplish this the Board are authorized to appoint a Secretary, who must once in each year attend a meeting of such teachers, school committees, and friends of education in each county as may assemble on invitation from the Board.

#### ABSTRACT OF THE MASS. SCHOOL RETURNS, FOR 1833—9.

We are indebted to Mr. MANN for a volume of 340 closely printed pages octavo, with the above title, which was prepared by him, and laid before the Legislature, in January last, in compliance with the requisitions of the law. It is the most complete and useful document of the kind which has come under our notice. In addition to the ordinary items of infor-

mation, it contains the reports of nearly one hundred school committees in as many towns, respecting the actual state and condition of school-houses, teachers and schools. In reading these, we have selected and classified under appropriate heads many suggestions, which, while they show "how deeply decay has eaten into the vitals of the school system" of Massachusetts, will serve as a mirror in which we may study the features of our own system. We know not where to find more valuable matter for our columns.

#### SCHOOL HOUSES.

**Holden.**—The committee feel constrained to say a word respecting school-houses. Some of these they regard as any thing rather than places of comfort. Some are exceedingly cold in winter, and most of them are excessively warm in summer. Some are not even plastered, and the committee know, from experience, that there can be no comfort in them in a cold day. But few of the houses have either a shutter or a blind, or even curtain, to prevent the entrance of the full blaze of the scorching sun of July and August. It is not expected, that the scholars will be killed by this excessive cold and heat; perhaps they will not materially suffer in their health; but, nevertheless, it must prove a serious hindrance to progress in knowledge. The committee regard the construction of the seats as decidedly bad. They are generally much too narrow. When religious meetings have been held in these houses, complaint has often been made of the difficulty of sitting an hour on such seats. If it be so, then how can scholars sit on them six hours a day, for three or five months in succession. Sometimes small scholars are placed on seats not more than four or five inches wide, and raised so far from the floor as to prevent the possibility of their reaching it; and then, because, that, in the course of half a day, they move to and fro a little, the little creatures are thought to be made of very restless materials.

**Fall River.**—Children spend so large a portion of their early life in the school house, that the general condition of those buildings, and their influence upon young minds are topics of prominence and magnitude. The construction and comfort of school rooms are closely connected with the love of study—with proficiency in study—with health, with anatomical formation—and with length of life. These are matters of great interest, and suggest important duties. Most of the public school houses in this town are of recent construction, and well fitted to the purpose of their designation.

**Kingston.**—There is not a single public school house in town that is not a disgrace to us, and a sure and inevitable cause of much sickness and continued ill health to many of your children.

Let us take, for instance, the house in District No. 1. It is one of the bleakest, and most exposed situations in the district;—perched upon a sand hill, with but little more than half the land it stands on belonging to the district,—projecting six feet into the highway, and liable at any time to be cut down by the surveyor,—without an inch of ground around it for the children to exercise upon.

Confinement is never pleasant under any circumstances. Who is there, that would accept the wealth of the Indies in exchange for fresh air and the free use of his limbs? And yet you crowd from forty to sixty children into that ill-constructed, miserable shell of a building, there to sit in the most uncomfortable seats that could be contrived, expecting that, with the occasional application of the birch, they will sit still for six hours in the day from four to six months in the year, and then come out learned in all the mysteries of knowledge, educated for manhood or womanhood. Now it is a fact beyond dispute, that in a room of that size, (say 16 by 24 feet) 35 children will render the air unfit for breathing in 45 minutes. To be sure, some fresh air is admitted by the numerous cracks and crevices all around, but, allowing one fourth for this, and after one hour, the children are injured by every breath they draw. The injury at each breath is small, we grant. But who, that has been confined in a crowded school-room, or any other room, has not felt the want of fresh air—an article with which the Almighty has supplied us in greater quantities than any other, but only in proportion to our wants. Who has not felt the dull headache—the pressure of the brain, as it seems, (when in fact, it is cruel oppression),—the dizziness, sleepy drowsiness of a school-room atmosphere? Who does not remember the new life and animation, the renewed strength and courage he has often felt when he has emerged from one of these poor prisons, to breathe the pure air of heaven?

**NORTHFIELD.**—In District No. 3, there is a very small, inconvenient house. Children, teachers and many parents, complain of its inconvenience and uncomfatableness. In winter the air becomes hot, impure and unpleasant; while some are suffering from heat, others are suffering from cold. There are not seats enough to accommodate all conveniently, nor is there room for any more. When the school attends to writing, it is necessary to make a great

change in order to accommodate the writers. This causes confusion and loss of time, every day; besides, some of the forms are loose, and easily joggled. The building and the room present no attraction to the young, but rather the contrary.

**RICHMOND.**—To pass by some of the school-houses, in this town, during the winter, look at the *broken windows*, and see a small load of *green beech or chestnut* wood before the door; and then, too, to think of the cold air rushing through the windows, and in the plenitude of its power, putting a "*veto*" upon the efforts of a small fire, which is making tremendous struggles to be cheerful, is enough to make any *feeling* parent shiver, to think how the mortality of his child must *ache*, before *such* wood can be made combustible. Are these things as they ought to be?

Two of our school-houses are of *brick*, pleasantly located, and affording that comfort and convenience which serves as a pleasant stimulant to those children who go there. But the other *three* look as though the wrath of the elements had been poured out upon them without stint or measure. \* \* \* When we think of these tottering frames, uneven floors, broken windows, and, above all, the polar breezes which reign within, can we not find some excuse for the reluctance of the children to attend school, or, what is far *worse* than reluctance, their willingness to attend it for a wrong motive and for wrong purposes?

**EDGARTOWN.**—There is not a single district school-house within the bounds of the town, that is anything like what such a building *should be*, in order that the children and youth attending the schools may reap the full benefit of the money, we raise yearly for their maintenance.

In one district, there is a house nearly new and of sufficient size; but it is so badly constructed within, that your committee would deem it quite a sufficient punishment for almost any of the less offences against the state, to be obliged to occupy one of its seats for one short week, six hours in a day; and the conveniences are less, or rather the inconveniences are greater, for children than for adults. In all other districts, the houses are old, very deficient in size, and almost altogether so, with respect to the proper means of ventilation. To say the most we can in their favor, they are very unsuitable for the purposes for which they are used, except in the milder seasons of the year, and they but poorly answer those ends, even then.

#### TEACHERS—EXAMINATION OF.

**FRAMINGHAM.**—Viewing it as now a settled maxim that, as is the teacher so is the school, and that the only method by which to elevate the character of the schools, and the standard of education, is to raise the qualifications of those who instruct, the committee have esteemed it one of their first duties to be exact and faithful in the examination of instructors, requiring of those who profess to teach that they be themselves thoroughly taught,—equal to the work they assume, and the just responsibility they bear.

**BRIMFIELD.**—In their examinations, both for the summer and winter schools, they have been minute and particular, and have been very careful not to approbate any, who did not, on examination, give evidence of being thoroughly furnished for their work. *They have acted upon the principle, that they would not employ one to teach the children of their neighbors, to whom they would be unwilling to commit their own children, for instruction.*

#### WANT OF WELL QUALIFIED TEACHERS.

**ANDOVER.**—One of the greatest "defects" in our present "means of education," is the want of capable and well-qualified teachers. The town has, indeed, been favored in this respect during the past year. But many are aware what a loss of time and money is often occasioned by the ignorance and incompetence of instructors. The committee would gladly defend the town from this evil, but to do it entirely is beyond their power. It is impossible for them to decide, in all cases, even after a rigid examination, that a candidate will be successful in the management of a school. The person may be thorough as a scholar and have ample recommendations, and yet utterly fail in the energy, and good government essential to a well-regulated and profitable school. But this deficiency sometimes cannot be known until it is too late—until the teacher has obtained a certificate of approbation, and has a right to insist on the fulfillment of the contract; and then the committee do not feel authorized to interfere, except in extreme cases. And it is a truth not to be denied or concealed, that many teachers, some of whom are quite acceptable and useful, are nevertheless sadly deficient in their qualifications. If the committee were always to insist that teachers should be fully qualified, in all respects, it would sometimes inconveniently delay the instruction of a school, if not altogether prevent it; schools must sometimes go untaught for the want of such teachers.

The surest remedy for this deficiency which the committee can suggest, is to provide for the proper qualification of the sons and daughters of our own inhabitants, and then to give them the preference as teachers. \* \* \*

**HAVENHILL.**—One of these obstacles is found in the *character of the teachers*. The rate of compensation granted to teachers, both male and female, in this town, has thus far been less in general, than could be obtained by the same individuals in other employments, for which no expense of education is necessary to prepare one—which are in themselves equally reputable with school teaching, less confining, and by no means more laborious. The inevitable consequence has been, that those engaged in the business of instruction have engaged in that service for a short time only—and that they often fail in two very important particulars,—*aptness to teach, and capacity to govern*. Furthermore, the character of a teacher in these two particulars is only to be ascertained by experiment. Hence it will sometimes and that too not infrequently occur, that an individual appears well upon his examination before us, and subsequently fails in these very particulars. \* \* \*

**SHARON.**—It may be a father has a son or a daughter whom he wished to have teach the school; an uncle, a nephew or a niece; or there is a cousin in a neighboring town, who wants the school; or some one in the district sent his scholar to a person, and the scholar learned wonderfully; or the prudential committee has no time to look up a better teacher;—still, when brought before the examining committee, he wishes him to pass, and thus, the son, nephew, or cousin, is palmed upon the district.

**FRAMINGHAM.**—The want of thoroughly-furnished teachers is the great want of our schools. The public demand, in this respect is yearly growing louder, and is more particularly attested by the increased liberality with which the labors of competent and skillful teachers are remunerated.

**HARDWICK.**—The ninth and last, but by no means the least defect in our common schools, is the employing of cheap but incompetent teachers. The consequences of such economy are too plain and evident to need description. It is but starving and stinting and dwarfing the youthful mind, for the sake of saving a dollar in the price of the teacher's wages. This is a kind of economy which no wise man adopts in other matters. If a horse is to be shod, or any other work to be done, it must be done by a workman. If a colt is to be broken and trained to the harness, it must be done by a horseman, well skilled in the business; but any bungler, who will work cheap, will do to teach and train up children.

**RUTLAND.**—But the committee are obliged to accede to the universal complaint of a want of able, faithful and devoted teachers. Enterprising and thoroughly educated young men can do better in almost any other kind of business, than in that of teaching. And till teaching in a common school becomes an honorable profession, we may despair of our schools being nurseries of virtue and of intelligence.

#### FACULTY OF GOVERNMENT NOT TESTED BY EXAMINATION BUT BY TRIAL.

**SHIRLEY.**—It is a fact not to be denied, that teachers have sustained themselves honorably when examined for approbation to instruct your schools, who, in consequence of their failure in government, have shown that they were entirely unqualified to perform the arduous and responsible duties of a teacher. In view of these considerations, your committee unanimously resolved, that they would, under ordinary circumstances, approbate no persons to instruct your schools, who had previously instructed, unless they could produce satisfactory evidence, that they had succeeded in governing the schools which they had taught, to the satisfaction of their employers. Your committee feel that the more strictly they adhere to this resolution, the more profitable will your schools be to all connected with them. But while they regard an adherence to this resolution as indispensable to the welfare of your schools, still it does not, and cannot reach every case.

#### FEMALE TEACHERS AND SUMMER SCHOOLS.

**BRIMFIELD.**—Your committee would respectfully inquire, whether the best interests of learning among us, do not most imperiously require a change in the customs of the people on this subject; and whether we shall not be induced to make an effort, the approaching season, to raise the character of our *summer schools*, and make them what they should be, *nurseries of sound learning*, rather than convert them into mere pastime, or substitute an empty form, for the real substance.

We are the more desirous of increasing the number in attendance, and raising their character, as they are uniformly taught by females, who, other things being equal, are, in nine cases out of ten, better adapted to promote the improvement of our children in learning, than teachers of the other sex. Indeed, if more females, of suitable qualifications, should be employed to teach our *winter schools*, we believe, that, ordinarily, more good might be accomplished and at much less pecuniary expense. The greatest improvement that has been made in any schools in this town, during the past winter, as the committee fully believe, has been in the schools taught by females.

**RANDOLPH.**—The younger boys and all the girls might attend



schools kept by competent females, and thus all might receive the benefit of a longer school term than they now do. Your committee are decidedly of opinion, that female teachers are far the most preferable to be employed in such schools. They are endowed by nature in a much higher degree than males, with those feelings and sympathies requisite for the proper management of younger children of both sexes. An organization of our schools upon this plan would be less expensive than on the present.

**RUTLAND.**—There has been less failure on the part of female teachers, indeed they have generally excelled, and, in some instances, have taught as good schools as we have ever visited. Three fourths of the pupils could be taught better by them than by our most able male teachers. Let two or more districts unite, according to the provisions of a late statute, and put their first classes under the care of an able male teacher, and provide female instructors for the other classes; and not only would our children be better educated, but there would be a great saving of expense, so that such compensation could be offered as to secure the most able teachers.

**GARDNER.**—As is usually the case, the summer schools have in general succeeded better than the winter schools. There is an aptness to teach, and a faculty of gaining the good will and affections of children in the female character and disposition, which eminently fit them for the successful management of a school.

**FRAMINGHAM.**—The idea once so commonly entertained, that any instructor is good enough for young children, is now exploded, and the conviction is becoming universal, that the twig must be bent with no unskilful hand, if the expanded and hardened tree is to be rightly inclined. The first, the elementary instruction of the young mind, is, doubtless, its most important instruction; and errors and faults contracted in the budding season of the mind may continue to grow and strengthen, without the power of correction, to its highest maturity.

#### GRADATION OF SCHOOLS.

**WEST CAMBRIDGE.**—The separation of the younger from the older children, and the placing of the former exclusively under female teachers has, we think, contributed much, and will contribute more, to the correct discipline of the schools and the progress of the children in learning.

**AMHERST.**—They have no doubt at all, that great benefits would be experienced at once by all the pupils in the common schools, from a classification and separation of the older and more advanced, from those who have proceeded but little, if at all, beyond the rudiments of education. No reasoning, and no array of facts, can make this position plainer than it must appear on its first statement, to every intelligent mind. It is a principle perfectly well settled, and invariably acted upon in all large towns and villages and wherever the numbers in any district are so large as to require a division of the school, while the territory is not so large as to make a division of the district expedient.

This town has for many years been divided into eight school districts. This arrangement enables the inhabitants of all parts of the town to send their children of all ages, to schools within a convenient distance of their several residences. But it should be borne in mind, that while the younger children find it quite as much as they can do, without excessive fatigue, to walk the distances that some are required to do; the older pupils can, with much less inconvenience or injury, travel twice or even three times as far. So that if the present accommodations are not lessened to the younger classes of pupils in the schools, the advantage of a classification of scholars may be obtained, by bringing the older, who are well able to come, from a greater distance. It is obvious, that in this way, the same advantages of classification, substantially, can be reached, as from the division of one school, and the establishment of its two or more branches, in the same building or neighborhood.

#### PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.

**GLOUCESTER.**—That all education beyond the mere rudiments of learning taught in the district schools ought to be confined to the families of a few fortunate citizens, who can afford to send their children out of town to school, is a proposition so aristocratical and justly odious, that it would not be listened to for a moment; yet such is the practical consequence of the neglect, on the part of the town, to provide higher schools.

**CHARLESTOWN.**—The design intended to be pursued in these upper schools, is to give all the pupils thorough instruction in all the common branches, and as they are well grounded in these, to give additional instruction in the higher branches. It has been the prevalent mistake of academies and other seminaries, that exclusive attention was paid to the higher branches, to the neglect of the common studies. Our free schools should never fall into so fatal an error; in them the solid foundation of the common studies should be preferred to a superficial overlaying of the sciences. The scholars should be occasionally obliged to review the arithmetic, the geography, the grammar, the spelling and the reading book, as long as they remain under tuition.

**LOWELL.**—One of the strongest arguments in favor of placing it at once on the most permanent and respectable basis, is, that it may draw to its halls the children of all classes; that it may be the place where the rich and the poor may meet together; where the wall of partition, which now seems raised between them, may be removed; where the kindlier feelings between the children of these classes may be begotten; where the indigent may be excited to emulate the cleanliness, decorum, and mental improvement of those in better circumstances; and where the children of our wealthier citizens will have an opportunity of witnessing and sympathizing, more than they now do, in the wants and privations of their fellows of the same age; where both insensibly forget the distinction which difference of circumstances would otherwise have drawn between them, and where all feel the conscious dignity of receiving their instruction as a right, to which, as the children of citizens, they are entitled, and which cannot be denied them.

**MEDFORD.**—Last not least, we come to speak of the High School, ranking probably with the first academies in the commonwealth; the pride and hope of its friends; where are developed not the powers and faculties of the mind only, but the better feelings of the heart; a community governed by virtuous principles and kindly feelings—where profane, vulgar and obscene language is discarded; and selfishness, pride, anger, wrath, malice, hatred, revenge and all the baser passions are by law shut out; and forbearance, meekness, patience, brotherly kindness and love are the acknowledged principles of action;—a little republic, prescribing its own rules, enacting its own laws, judging its own causes, and punishing its own offenders;—the teacher, a mere executive officer to enforce the decisions of the majority against the lawless and disobedient of this self-governed and happy community. Such should be the High School; to such a condition it is rapidly approaching, and to teacher and pupil we award our unqualified praise.

**SOUTHBOROUGH.**—We have in our school a considerable number of scholars, so far advanced that they need a school of a higher grade. The number of different studies already pursued in our common schools, is quite too large. No teacher, in schools so promiscuously assembled as our common schools, can profitably attend to so great a variety of studies. The common school is not the proper place for pursuing the higher branches of an English education. Yet our talented and ambitious youth ought to have all the facilities possible for acquiring a finished education. And this ought to be afforded to all classes, without distinction, to the females as well as the males, the poor as well as the rich, the black as well as the white. Hence the cause of education among us, requires a school of a higher order, so arranged as to afford to all our scholars, sufficiently advanced in studies in our common schools, an opportunity of acquiring at home a thorough English education. Many of our scholars, who would gladly press forward in their studies and rise to very distinguished usefulness, are kept back, and kept down, because they cannot afford the expense of obtaining an education abroad.

#### PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES.

**WEST NEWBURY.**—It is generally believed that academies have done much indirectly to injure the district schools. Now, subscription schools do the same injury on the same principle. The poor cannot well afford to send to subscription schools. In many districts the sentiment is prevailing that they want all the town money for the winter school. Hence in many districts there is no school open for the poor, during the best period of the year. Consequently if, summer after summer, the children of the poorer families are kept from school, is there not a strong reason in human nature, why these same children will not like to stand side by side in the winter schools, with those whose summer advantages in subscription schools, because their parents were more able, give the latter children so much pre-eminence? Not to have summer schools of the best character is wholly anti-republican, if not illiberal.

**RANDOLPH.**—The superiority of academies and private schools over our common schools is attained by the better qualifications of their teachers and the manner of their organization; the interest felt both by the teacher and the parents of their pupils, for their efficiency and prosperity, and their independence of any interference by parents with their government and mode of instruction. Were our common schools supplied with teachers of equally good qualifications, their government as free from interference of parents, and their organization reformed, they would be able to compete successfully with academies and private schools. The great inconvenience which these now suffer, by having children of all ages placed under the same instructor, should be remedied by a separation of the older from the younger. Such an organization would lessen the number of classes, and render their government more simple and easy. And it is believed there are few, if any, districts in the town, which cannot adopt this arrangement, either by themselves, or by two or more of them uniting for the support of a winter

school for their male children, who are too old to attend upon the instruction of female teachers.

#### EXAMINATION OF SCHOOLS BY COMMITTEES.

**SHARON.**—While present, [in schools] the object has been, to watch the internal operations of the schools and teachers and their progress, to suggest such alterations and improvements in studies, books and method of teaching, as were deemed necessary. To do this, it has been found necessary, sometimes, to allow the teacher and scholars to proceed in their regular course, at others, to take the labor of hearing the exercises, and at others, to intersperse questions of our own with those of the teacher.

**FALL RIVER.**—In our monthly visitation, it has been our practice to inquire into the *abuses, wants and deficiencies* of the school;—to examine the *progress* of the scholars, and the *discipline* of the teachers;—to enjoin upon the former *obedience, diligence* and the principles of *sound morality*; and upon the latter, *fidelity, promptitude* and *decision*; and in all respects, as far as was practicable, to strengthen the hands of the teacher, and to encourage the efforts of the pupils. With the *government, order, instruction, progressive improvement and general management and condition* of most of the public schools of this town, your committee were well satisfied; and we are quite confident that our schools are taking a position very considerably in *advance* of what they have held in former years.

#### BOOKS.

**LINCOLN.**—The number of books in several of the branches is far too numerous. In the opinion of successive committees, this circumstance operates as a powerful impediment to the general progress. It unnecessarily consumes an undue proportion of the time; it increases the labor of the instructor, without yielding a corresponding advantage; it is a serious inconvenience. All experienced school committees and judicious instructors agree, that uniformity in books is of the greatest importance. And this uniformity cannot be dispensed with, but at the expense of the good of the schools generally.

**FALL RIVER.**—The lack of *suitable books* in a few instances, forms another serious ground of complaint. As well might our artisans be required to build complicated *machinery without tools*, as our children to acquire education without *books*.

**MIDDLEBOROUGH.**—In consequence of the almost endless variety of school books in present use, scholars have oftentimes been kept at school under great disadvantages.

Some scholars were in the habit of using old, antiquated books, while others were supplied with more modern books. Some scholars were supplied with one author and edition, while another scholar would be likely to have another author or another edition. Every different kind of books has been for years accumulating in our schools. This great variety, in the opinion of the committee, so far from diminishing, had every prospect of increasing. New books from new authors were constantly appearing, in our schools, and classes, almost as numerous as the scholars themselves, were obliged to be formed to accommodate, not the instructor, but the books.

They were unanimous in the opinion, that one regular system of school books might be adopted, with great advantage to the town.

It may be proper, also, to notice, that the committee authorized the town treasurer to purchase a certain number of each of the books prescribed, for the use of the town to be sold and accounted for by him. They directed the town treasurer to furnish these books to any scholar in town, desiring to purchase at the cost. \* \* This regulation, the committee have the highest confidence, will prove a great benefit to the town. \* \*

#### TOO MANY STUDIES.

**DANVERS.**—We allude to this variety for the purpose of expressing the opinion, that the course is not the most profitable for the pupils themselves, whose minds are so often turned from one subject to another; and also, that the school, as a whole, is by this means deprived of attention by the teacher to the common branches of study, to which it is equitably entitled. As is to be expected under the circumstances, we are unable to speak as well of the important branch, *reading*, in this school as in several others; the same is true, to some extent, of the recitations in geography and arithmetic. \* \*

The variety of studies, (we say it to the praise of the school,) the variety of studies was less here [No 13.] than in most districts. We say, too, and perhaps it is a consequence of the fact just stated, that we have no where else found so few poor readers and reciters,—no where else found improvement extended more generally to every pupil, and in every branch of study. \* \*

**LEXINGTON.**—The scholars applied themselves to their studies, but the great difficulty seemed to have originated in the multiplicity of the studies to which attention was given. With an average attendance of thirty, there were *twenty-five* classes. Ancient history, philosophy, chemistry, algebra, astronomy, and one of the dead

languages were taught. Of course, in order to give any attention, not to say to do any justice to them, the smaller scholars must be neglected. \* \*

**MEDWAY.**—We think it an evil for children to commence the study of history, astronomy, philosophy or chemistry, before they are able to read with fluency and propriety, and are well versed in common arithmetic, grammar and geography. If they pass to the higher branches, before they are sufficiently familiar with the lower, they will not only be embarrassed in their progress by ignorance of principles involved in the subjects of their investigation, and which the student in these branches is supposed to know, but they will be likely still to neglect, through all the future circumstances of life, what they refuse to learn at the proper time. The committee see no good reason why those scholars, who are sufficiently familiar with the lower branches, should not be permitted to advance to the higher; but they find that many, who are not prepared to do this, are inclined to do it, and the indulgence of one in this course, renders many more desirous of pursuing the same.

#### PRIMARY STUDIES.

**WEST CAMBRIDGE.**—Far better would it be that even more pains should be taken in future than has been in times past to make the children correct in spelling, *intelligent* as well as *fluent* readers, emulous to acquire the beautiful accomplishment of a fair hand-writing, and a ready and thorough knowledge of arithmetic. \* \*

**MIDDLEBOROUGH.**—Our teachers have paid too much regard to the higher branches of education, to the neglect of first principles. They have been too eager to study rhetoric, philosophy and the languages, before they have obtained a thorough knowledge of reading and spelling. One very general failing of our teachers, arises from this very deficiency. They have not studied sufficiently, those very branches which they are required to teach. The consequence is, that they cannot thoroughly instruct what they have not been thoroughly instructed in themselves.

Reading and spelling should be thoroughly taught in our common schools. They are branches of education, in which every teacher should be competent to instruct. The same may be remarked of the first principles of arithmetic, grammar and geography. If a scholar is permitted to come out of the district school, without this foundation laid, he will always suffer by the defect. This every body knows. \* \* If a scholar leaves the district school a poor reader or a poor speller, he is likely to remain so all the days of his life. He has very little prospect of making up the deficiency anywhere else.

**CONWAY.**—Three or four years since, the committee became deeply impressed with the fact that the fundamental branches of education, viz. reading and spelling, were quite too much neglected in our schools, and from that time they have been making unwearied efforts, in connexion with the examination of teachers, and visits to schools, to remedy the evil, and, in most cases, we are happy to say, the efforts have been highly successful. But, while the spelling book has been more thoroughly and understandingly explored, the attention has not necessarily been *confined* to the first rudiments; scholars have been encouraged to *advance* in the acquisition of knowledge, and instead of pursuing the old mode of traversing the same ground, year after year, they have taken up particular studies, and when they have thoroughly mastered them, their attention has been directed to some other pursuit; and in this way, many have not only become fair candidates for the higher departments of science, but have been successfully engaged in studies common to our academies and high schools; and, we have noticed with interest, that in those schools where the *higher* branches have received the most attention, the *lower* have been most fully appreciated and understood.

#### SPELLING.

**WESTPORT.**—The common method of teaching orthography in our schools, is to learn a column or page from the spelling-book, and then have the words put out to them by the teacher and spell for places. The consequence of this is, that, though they may be kept in spelling classes from the time of their earliest combination of letters, up to the time of their leaving school, when they are called upon to write a letter to an absent friend, they will make the most egregious blunders. As we seldom or never have occasion to spell a word in the practical business of life, except it be to write it, we think this will indicate the true method of learning the art.

**CHARLESTOWN.**—Whenever a pupil made a mistake in recitation, he was compelled afterwards to repeat that part of his answer correctly. Thus, if a word in spelling was given out, and it should almost go round the class, yet every one who had missed that word was obliged to spell it afterwards as corrected—no matter how much time it might take up. And this is going upon a correct principle.

**BRIMFIELD.**—While other branches may be, and should be, introduced, it should, we think, be a settled principle in our common



school instruction, that the spelling book should never be abandoned by a scholar, be he ever so far advanced in years, till he is able to spell every word, and give a definition of the same, from "baker," to "ail, to be troubled," and answer understandingly every question from the beginning to the end of the book. To proceed to other branches without being able to master the spelling book, is like building your superstructure without having laid any sort of foundation.

#### READING.

**WESTPORT.**—We have been generally impressed with the want of intelligence in the reading classes. In some instances, after having read several pages with all the formality of a school exercise, they have been, in numerous instances, unable to give any account of the subject, upon which they had just been reading. And as the principal object of learning to read, is, either to obtain knowledge themselves, or to communicate that knowledge to others, neither object is accomplished, when the black and white appearance of the book is the boundary of the reader's ideas.

Imagine the effect upon ourselves, of reading what we do not understand, for even one week. It would unfit us for any impressiveness in either tone or emphasis. But the youth in our schools have been allowed, from infancy until the time they "finish their education," to read what they have not been required or even expected to comprehend.

**NEWSBURY.**—As one of the defects in our schools, the committee think they have witnessed a disposition among some of the older pupils to go beyond their attainments, neglecting things of primary importance for the pursuit of some higher branch of learning. It has been noticed in some of our schools, that the larger young men were unwilling to belong to a reading and spelling class, choosing to devote all their time to "cyphering," or other higher studies. Now, in this calculating age, your committee would not undervalue a good knowledge of arithmetic,—it is essential to the education of every New England young man; but in this age and under a government like ours, where the safety and perpetuity of our institutions depend upon general intelligence, the committee feel that an *ability to read*, understandingly, and with ease, can never be overrated. And yet how few of our young men attain to the ability in our schools to read with *ease and pleasure* to themselves or others! How many on leaving the schools leave their books, and never resort to them as a source of enjoyment in after life! It is supposed, that if the art of reading could be more thoroughly taught in our schools, that a far greater number would become reading men, and our community would of consequence become very much more intelligent.

**CHARLESTOWN.**—It is necessary that the teachers should themselves be good readers, so that they may teach their pupils to read naturally, intelligibly and with energy. The right culture and command of the voice, so that it may express in the proper intonation and accent, the meaning and spirit of what is to be read, in the same distinct and natural manner as it is uttered forth in conversation, may, under skillful instruction, be easily acquired in early childhood. But if careless habits are then suffered to be formed, if the mere calling out of words in one monotonous tone, in a blundering manner, and without regard to the sense, be then allowed to pass for reading, the child, when grown up, will never be able to master this accomplishment without great hardship and struggle. The pupils should have pieces assigned to them, adapted to their comprehension, and should often hear them well read by their teacher. After the reading of the lesson, he should often ask familiar questions concerning it, so as to insure their attention to the subject. And such is the course generally pursued in these schools.

**ROWE.**—A habit of reading in this low, incoherent and hurried manner, once contracted, is most difficult to overcome, and unless overcome in youth, destroys all chance of the person becoming a good, or even what we may call a decent reader. A person thus reading cannot accent or emphasize a word or part of a sentence, in the least degree; and without this all effect is lost, and, however interesting the subject may be, gives pain rather than pleasure to the hearer.

#### ARITHMETIC.

**SWANSEY.**—As soon as a child can master the putting of sentences together, he should be instructed in the knowledge of numbers. We believe nothing in our schools has been taught worse than arithmetic. Many a teacher, who has been through the book, and, as he will say, can do all the sums, understands nothing as he should, and of course can do nothing to explain the principles of this important art to his pupils. His practice is to tell the scholar to take his book and go on, and if he finds any sums he cannot perform, he must come to him. He sometimes partially gets the rules, and often not, but of the whys and wherefores, he is in the most profound darkness.

#### WRITING.

**RANDOLPH.**—Hitherto the practice has generally been for the scholar to take his writing materials and pursue his exercise, while the teacher was engaged in hearing recitations, giving no attention to those who were writing, other than mending their pens, and hasty directions how to hold them. Experience proves that in this way, little if any progress will be made in acquiring the art. The immediate supervision of the teacher is as necessary in this, as in any other exercise in the school. It is therefore recommended, that, hereafter, a portion of time, perhaps one hour in a day, or one or two days in the week and in the afternoon, should be exclusively set apart for this exercise: and the remainder of the school be dismissed, so that the undivided attention of the instructor may be given to those who are learning to write.

#### HISTORY.

**WESTMINSTER.**—One great defect in the course of instruction in our schools at the present day, is an almost total neglect of the history of our own country, and of the constitution and government under which we live. The object of education is, to qualify our children for usefulness—for the faithful discharge of those duties which will naturally devolve upon them. Our sons will soon become citizens, and be called upon to exercise the highest prerogative of freemen—the right of suffrage. Being the depositaries of sovereignty, and having the destiny of the republic in their hands, when they arrive at age, they ought to obtain during their minority, a general knowledge of our form of government, the nature and character of our institutions and the duties of citizens.

#### GEOGRAPHY AND BLACKBOARD.

**LEOMINSTER.**—It was thought, that a more thorough knowledge of arithmetic and geography might be obtained if the scholars should be required to explain sums and draw maps. For the purpose of facilitating this course, blackboards have been introduced into all the schools where they were not already found. Children have been desired to draw maps either upon the blackboards, slate or paper, in all the schools. The success in this measure has been complete. The schools in town have excelled in this branch of study.

**HARDWICK.**—The committee are happy to see that the blackboard has found its way into almost all our school houses, and that its utility begins to be duly appreciated. In fact, it may be used with success for illustrating almost any branch of science. In one school, during the past winter, it has been used for the combined purpose of teaching, at the same time, the art of writing, composition, punctuation, the use of capital letters and spelling. All these several exercises were combined in one. The method is to call out a class, with their slates and pencils, on the recitation seats in front of the blackboard. One scholar is required to write upon the blackboard, and the others upon their slates whatever the teacher dictates; and all are left to exercise their own judgment with regard to its execution. After the performance public criticisms are made, and the rules of grammar explained. In this way, scholars will soon learn to write, spell, compose, point off, and use capital letters, correctly. And this is by no means a small attainment. There are comparatively but few of our young men and women who have completed their education at our common schools, who can write even a letter correctly, and without violating any of the rules of orthography, etymology, syntax or prosody.

#### SINGING.

**CHARLESTOWN.**—The beautiful exercise of singing, too, has been generally introduced into these schools, and those who will take the trouble to visit one of them and witness the children, whose countenances are beaming with gladness, joining their pleasant voices in some appropriate song, will be convinced that in no better way could a portion of the school hours be occupied. These happy influences, combining together, have the effect to render the school room a pleasant place of resort to the young, who go there with minds more willing and in a more suitable state to receive instruction.

Singing also has its charms and its improving power here, in the upper school, as in the schools of the lower grade. The board have been inclined to encourage, to a proper degree, the introduction of these new influences. They believe it to be their duty and the duty of the teachers, to do every thing in their power, consistent with the great object of communicating knowledge, to render the school room inviting, and to make it serve in reality to the young as a second home.

#### ORAL INSTRUCTION.

**CHARLESTOWN.**—It is in the power of these teachers to communicate orally much interesting and agreeable information upon various common, though important matters. It is not to be expected that children, from 4 to 8 years of age, will spend all their school hours

in studying the book. The youngest children should not, for some time, even pretend to hold a book, for if they did they could only play with and abuse it. They learn the letters and short simple sentences, from large printed cards, held by the teacher, or hung upon the side of the room. But they may learn much more by listening to her, who, in an agreeable and impressive manner, may interest them with a variety of oral instruction. But she should always be careful to question them afterwards upon the things she has told them. It is well known, that adults can remember any fact or suggestion communicated to them by a friend, in a pleasant interview, much longer than if they read it in the same words from a book; it is more true of young children. In this way, these teachers can be of more service than by making the youngest pupils hold constantly before their eyes "books adapted for children." But it requires great resources on their part, and a constant exercise of thought.

#### SCHOOL REPORTS.

**DANVERS.**—For more than twenty years, have we been pursuing, in all its important particulars, the system of reporting the schools at the annual town meeting.

Some of us felt and well remember the influences of this system, (immediately after its adoption,) upon both pupil and teacher. We know that then a new spirit was kindled in some of our schools;—a spirit of study—persevering and intense study. We know, too, that our teachers then were vastly more efficient than those who stood at the master's desk in preceding winters. We believe that, down to the present time, many of the pupils, and most of the teachers, have continued to receive favorable impulses and valuable aid from the practice here alluded to.

#### LATE AND IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE—SCHOOL REGISTERS.

**WESTBOROUGH.**—In some of our schools the year past, teachers have been compelled to commence day after day with not more than one third or one half of their pupils present, while the tardy come "like a continual dropping in a rainy day," often during the whole first hour of the school. This is a prominent hindrance to the progress of the school. There is a sad loss in time and interest, and instruction, to the individual thus tardy. It occasions also, a derangement oftentimes, in the order of classification, as to reading and recitation. It is moreover a great interruption in their various studies. As our school houses are constructed, it is often necessary for three or four to stand up, or move out of their places, to let the tardy pass to his seat. This process often repeated occasions great loss to the school. It adds also to the difficulty of preserving that degree of discipline and stillness in a school room which is essential to a good school. In the winter season, also, there is another serious evil connected with this practice. The constant opening of the door lets in a fresh current of cold air, which, in most of our school houses is by no means needful, either for the health or comfort of the inmates. An extra quantity of fuel must be deposited upon the fire to warm the house, which, while it throws the small children nearest, into a fever, still fails to reach the more distant. Hence the order of the school is disturbed by the long process often necessary, by alternate visits to the fire, to raise the temperature sufficiently to commence study. To say that one third of the morning is sometimes unnecessarily wasted in this manner, would doubtless be a moderate estimate of the evil. And when they remember that it is an evil which parents in many instances might prevent by a word, your committee cannot but cherish the hope that every parent will have sufficient regard to the welfare of his own and his neighbor's children, in all possible cases to apply the remedy.

**WESTPORT.**—On viewing the registers kept in the several district schools, it appears that irregular attendance must be a great hindrance to the progress of the scholars. After the teacher has arranged his classes, if one-half of each class is absent during a recitation, not only those who are absent lose the benefit of it, but it loses much of its interest with those who remain; and when the absent ones return, they are then behind their classes; and the whole ground must be gone over again, or those who have been absent must proceed superficially and to little advantage.

**ANDOVER.**—Another "defect" which the committee would mention, is the non-attendance of children. It is an evil of great magnitude, which, as they have found by experience, it is easier to describe and lament, than it is to remedy. So far as it prevails, it completely nullifies the advantages of our school system. Of what avail are the best teachers, if pupils are not present to be taught? Of what avail are the most liberal appropriations and the utmost care of committees, if the children are not in the way to receive the good designed? It is in the power of the committee to present facts on this point which are painful and alarming, showing a large number of children who omit to improve nearly all opportunities of education, and showing the enormous extent to which the money of the

town and the privileges furnished are absolutely wasted. A child sent to school one day, and detained at home the next, or sent a part of one week, and detained the whole of the following week, cannot learn; he falls behind his class, loses his interest, becomes discouraged, hates his school, and his education is ruined. To send him at all, in this way, is to delude him with an appearance, and not to benefit him with a reality. When this arises, not from the thoughtlessness of children, but, as it too often does, from the inconsiderate demands of parents and guardians on their time, it seems both selfish and cruel. It is selfish, because for a small gain, it occasions an immense and irreparable loss. And it is doing a wrong to children for which they will have ground of complaint against their parents, and may justly reproach their memory, through a whole life of ignorance, if not of shame.

**BEVERLY.**—They have regretted not to see more of the parents and friends of the pupils present at the examinations, though a few of the districts afforded very honorable exceptions to this remark. In this, as in various other ways, very much may be done by friends to promote the progress of Common School Education. It is to them indeed we may almost say, mainly, that we must look for its greatest success. Their interest and co-operation are needed to breathe life into it, and are particularly needed in securing punctuality and constancy of attendance at school. By registers carefully kept in all the schools of the town, it has been ascertained, that during the past year the average attendance, out of the whole number that have been in them, has been only from two thirds to three quarters—implying, as must be obvious, a most serious loss, on the part of many, of precious privileges. \* \*

**WEYMOUTH.**—There has been great irregularity of attendance. This is a point of great moment, and one which calls for the special consideration of parents. It is injurious to all concerned; to the parent, by increasing the expense of education; to those who give constant attendance, by retarding their progress; and to those who are irregular, by increasing the labor of keeping up with their class, or by inducing the habit of inaccuracy, which is with great difficulty overcome. It is discouraging to the teacher, by increasing the labor of instruction, and rendering more difficult a task, which under any circumstances must be sufficiently arduous, if he understand in any good degree the responsibility of his station.

#### SMALL DISTRICTS.

**MIDDLEBURY.**—Several of the public schools are extremely small. The committee are of opinion, that the small districts might be joined to larger districts adjoining them, without any serious disadvantage to either, but with great advantage to the small districts. Better schools and better instruction would be secured to a large number of our scholars;—to those, who at present have the advantage of public instruction but a few short weeks in the year, and that, too, under such instructors, as a few dollars will procure. The committee would recommend to the town the propriety of taking some immediate action on the subject.

**ANDOVER.**—It ought also to be considered, that the small districts are the remote districts on the outskirts of the town, and that they are not on an equality with the central districts as it respects many privileges. In the small districts the population is so scattered that the children have to go further to attend school, and therefore have not the same opportunity for attending regularly. Besides, the central districts have academies in their vicinity, to which they can send their children with little expense, while the remote districts are wholly cut off from this advantage, or cannot enjoy it without great inconvenience and cost. The central districts, also, can easily have and do have private schools, without much expense; but in the small, outskirt districts, the families are so scattered, and there are so few who are able to support a private school, that they are almost wholly deprived of this means of educating their children. In these various respects, as well as others, the inhabitants of these districts are not, and cannot be on an equality with others. It is not in the power of the town to make them share equally in these advantages, or to favor them in these respects. But in distributing the school money, the town can favor them. By giving them a liberal share, the town can make up to them, in some degree, what they lose in other respects; though with all the favor that can be shown in this way, they never can have equal advantages with the population of our centres. And we appeal to all reasonable and upright men, if it is not right—if it is not a duty to consider these things; and so distribute public favors as to promote, as far as practicable, a general equality of privileges among all the inhabitants of the town.

#### CHANGE OF TEACHERS.

**CHARLESTOWN.**—This establishment was therefore doing no good during the summer, except that it furnished in miniature, to the whole town, a felicitous and well-timed illustration of the decided disadvantages of putting these district schools under a constant change and succession of teachers; so that a child who attends upon one of them from the age of four up to sixteen years, will have



been placed under the plastic form and guidance of perhaps twenty-four different teachers—and when he grows up, he may know more instructors than he has cousins or family relations.

PARENTAL CO-OPERATION AND VISITATION OF SCHOOLS.

KINGSTON.—We wish our public schools and school-houses were more known and better understood. It is because they are so little known that they are so little attended to,—and the reverse is equally true. Not more than a dozen or fifteen heads of families throughout the town, ever think of visiting our public schools, where they send their sons and daughters, year after year, to learn that which may be for their weal or woe through all time. And the children, seeing so little interest felt by their parents, in the schools, take comparatively less interest in their studies than they would, were their parents more alive to their duties, and more ready to furnish them with the facilities which they need for their education.

SHARON.—All know what smooth and lawyer-like stories roguish children can tell their parents, and that it is possible for parents to think their children right, especially those parents who seldom or never go into a school. Under such circumstances the child lights the flame, the parent fans it, and then scatters the firebrands till great injury is done. Some of the greatest evils thus arise in the district. A prejudice is awakened which results, if not in the dismissal of a good teacher, at least, to the detriment of the school. This would have been avoided, had that parent visited the school.

AMHERST.—We cannot forbear expressing our sincere regret, that parents are so much inclined to leave the whole business of visiting the places where their children are undergoing such important discipline, to the committee alone. Were more of them individually to take a seat now and then in the school-room, simply to be silent observers of what is passing there, it would add a great deal to the good order of the school; and were they to appear, in considerable numbers together, at the closing examination, it would give vastly more consequence to that occasion, than it now generally has; while another and most happy effect of it all would be, the maintaining of that sympathy between themselves and the teacher, which is so essential to his success, and for want of which his work is sometimes rendered doubly arduous and difficult. If parents would visit the schools more, they would better understand the trials which the teacher meets with, and better know how to help him through with them. Only let there be, on the part of fathers and mothers, a readiness to sympathize and co-operate with him who has the charge of their sons and daughters, and comparatively easy will be his task in guiding and governing them. On the other hand, let there be in parents a readiness to take an attitude of opposition on the slightest occasion, or simply to manifest that degree of indifference, which their children will at once set down as a license for behaving as they please at school, and the task becomes any thing but an easy one. We would, therefore, earnestly recommend the gaining of that acquaintance with the teacher, and with the scene of his daily toils, which will be likely to lead into the so much desired and needed co-operation.

FALL RIVER.—If all parents would countenance able and faithful teachers, and visit (at least once a year) the school which their children attend,—and promptly and cheerfully supply the required books and apparatus for the schools,—and see that their children are decently clothed and cleanly in their persons,—and punctual and constant in their attendance, your committee are well assured, that under the present statutory provisions of the Commonwealth, faithfully executed, and the benediction of Almighty God, the Public Common Schools will, at no distant day, equal the most sanguine expectations of the patriotic, the wise and the good.

BERKLEY.—Whenever they are invited and urged to take an interest in the examination of a district school, they will excuse themselves by saying—"we are not competent, we have no time,"—and by many such frivolous excuses. In order, therefore, to remedy this evil of indifference, parents must awake and do their duty; they must take an interest, a deep interest, in our schools; they must go into the school room, and in this way demonstrate to their children that they have an interest there; and, while in the school room, they will have an opportunity of witnessing the manner of the teacher, in teaching and governing the school, as well as the deportment of the scholars. There, they will have a good opportunity of witnessing the teacher's laborious task, his cares and his trials. Such visits will have a salutary influence on their minds, and constrain them to exercise none other than kind and friendly feelings towards the teacher of their school; and thus, by their presence, they will encourage the hearts and strengthen the hands of both scholars and teacher. Union is strength. Parents must all be united in the common cause of education; they must all pull together in the same district; for, whenever we find discord and disagreement amongst parents and families, there we see it growing into a party thing.

ANDOVER.—To illustrate the importance of a due interest and co-operation on the part of parents, the chairman of the committee would state a fact on his own responsibility. One of the schools

which he has personally superintended has borne a higher character than any other under his care. For twelve years, the whole period of his acquaintance with it, it has uniformly maintained a decided superiority over every other school in the parish. And the cause is as obvious as the fact is certain. It is not because the district has had better teachers, or children of better minds, or expended more money; but because the parents have manifested a deeper interest in the management and prosperity of their school. This they do by sustaining the teacher's influence, by securing the punctual attendance of their children, and by their own large attendance upon every public examination. The examination is thus made an occasion of importance; it is anticipated through the term, and stimulates both teacher and pupil. Its effect is seen in promoting the fidelity of the one, and the improvement of the other. Why should it not be thus in every district in this town?

NEWBURY.—After all the teacher's efforts to have a good school, the parents have the power to "do or undo" for him, to sustain or prostrate all his plans for good discipline and successful teaching,—and too often is it the case, that parental influence is thus unhappily perverted. A few words of complaint against the teacher in the child's hearing, a single expression of willingness to "take the part" of a pupil, should any difficulty arise,—may often give serious inconvenience to the instructor, and may very likely create the necessity for severity which otherwise would not be called for. Your committee are fully persuaded, that any attempt on the part of parents, under ordinary circumstances, to contravene the authority of the teacher, is ill-judged, and ought not to be countenanced by the patriotic citizen; and whenever by such interference his authority is diminished or his usefulness impaired, while he sustains an injury, the community sustains a greater injury than he,—an injury which it may be found very difficult to repair.

On the other hand, let all parents lend their cheerful aid to the instructors of their children—encourage their well-meant endeavors to be useful either in instruction or discipline,—show that they take an interest in their work and its results,—take a firm stand on the side of good order,—preach every where, and especially at home, the doctrine of thorough discipline, and, above all, exemplify such doctrines in their own practice; and, while they will seldom have occasion to complain of broken heads or purple stripes, they may have the satisfaction of knowing that our school houses are, as they ever should be, the quiet nurture-rooms of those things only, which "are lovely and of good report."

CHELMFORD.—The committee cannot persuade themselves to close this report without adverting to the apparent apathy and coldness which parents and guardians manifest on the subject of public schools. They say *apparent*, for they do not doubt that parents in general do indeed really feel a very lively interest in the instruction of their children. Indeed, they know this to be the fact. But still it is no less a fact that they are generally guilty of a very culpable neglect of manifesting that interest by attending the examinations and otherwise visiting the several schools. They know very well that it is sometimes pleaded in extenuation of this neglect that they have a committee whose express duty it is to attend to this business; but this does not do away the charge, nor in the least release them from their responsibility. The committee are firm in the belief, (and this conviction is founded in part on the experience which some of them have had in teaching,) that if parents would make it their practice to attend the examinations universally, and visit occasionally the schools in their respective districts, individually, the influence they would exercise over the character of the schools, in raising the ambition and exciting an emulous spirit among the scholars would far exceed the exertions of the best qualified committee. Nor is this all. Instances are not wanting, it is presumed, in most school districts in which difficulties have arisen in school, which have threatened at least, if not completed the destruction of all the usefulness which otherwise might have been derived from it, which would have been wholly avoided had the parents visited the school, and seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears instead of borrowing the use of those of their neighbors and children.

MALDEN.—Good order in the school is indispensable to its usefulness; and though this must chiefly be preserved by the efforts of the teacher, yet his efforts will be unavailing unless they are seconded by the authority of parents at home. If children hear the parents speak of the teacher in terms of disrespect or reproach,—if they find their parents ready to take part with them against their teacher, in case of any difficulty arising,—if they find that their parents are jealous of partiality or undue severity on the part of the teacher; it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to keep those children in due subordination at the school room. If the parent finds it a very difficult task to govern three or four children at home, and keep them in tolerable trim, how much sorer is the toil of the teacher who is expected to keep 50 or 60 children in the very finest order at school! Is not the teacher presumed to know better than a refrac-

